A DIFFERENT KIND OF MEGA DRIVE MAG

MEGA ACTION

OVER 25 GAMES INSIDE

MARCH 94
ISSUE 11 £1.75

100% MEGADRIVE

SONIC BOOM
Back for more

Featured inside:
Virtua Racing, Skitchin', Madness, Dracula Unleashed, NBA Jam, Chaos Engine and more. Plus a top EA Sports profile.

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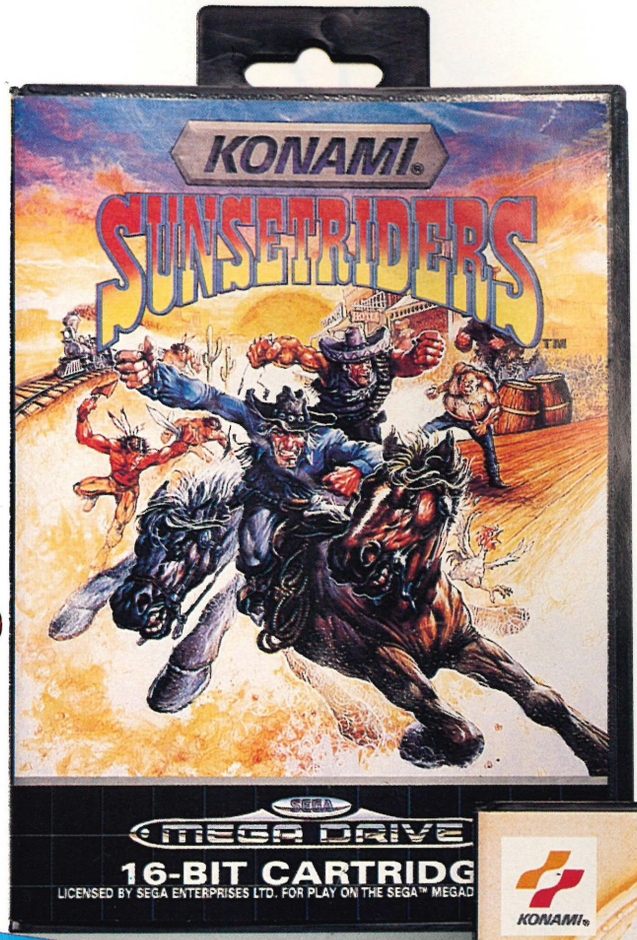
KONA

SUNSETRIDERS

It has obviously had a lot of attention paid to every aspect of its production... it's superb.
MEGATECH 87%
Very impressive SEGA PRO 87%



ROCKET KNIGHT ADVENTURES

A top class product with attention to detail second to none. Amazing. MEGA ACTION 94%

RKA is possibly the best game on the Mega Drive ever. GAMESMASTER 92%

SEGA
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TEENAGE MUTANT HERO TURTLES® THE HYPERSTONE HEIST™

Good clean amphibious fun. **SEGA PRO 87%**

Turtles really is a visually stunning game

MEGA TECH 87%

TINY TOON Adventures Buster's Hidden Treasure™

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a fast paced platform game that is similar to Sonic, but....better fun.

Mega Drive Advanced Gaming 93%

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MEGA

With 1994 well and truly under way it looks like the Sonic Boom could well have reached its peak, well on the Mega Drive anyway. The market is now flooded with quality games which we have been fighting over to review. Just take time out to review this issue and you will see just how crammed this month has turned out to be. Will Sonic 3 steal the crown for the ultimate game? Will Virtua Racing prove the SNES a piece of defunct hardware? Read on now!

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WORLD NEWS

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What an issue, what a month! There's some hot gossip from the Accolade stable with a Bubsy animation project and we announce the winner of the Terminator competition from November.

SHOWTIME USA

8

Our lucky overseas correspondant Jason Spiller attended the biggest computer show in the world, the CES. What did he uncover? What secrets were hidden at this prestgious event? Turn now!

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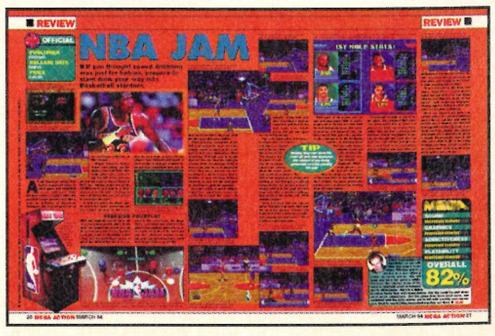
This month we have some serious software reviews and previews with Virtua Racing played in depth, Sonic 3 and such delights as Ren and Stimpy, Lost Vikings and The PGA Euro Tour Golf!



SONIC 3

14

He's back, with more levels, better routines and some nifty tunes to explore the new worlds Sega have created. Enjoy the definitive review of this blockbusting game here in Mega Action!

OVER THE EDGE

43

Brad's big night out. Join our fly-talking hero as he trips round Royale's, one of Manchester's finest clubs. Learn what to wear, how to walk, talk and dance the night away! Brad also bungee jumps, but survives. Ah well, maybe next time.

EA SPORTS

It's in the game... Find out exactly why EA are responsible for the biggest and best sporting titles ever. Turn now for the full story of this famous trademark and some exclusive revelations!

EA SPORTS

SPORTING TRIBUTES

54

Now is your chance to win both exclusive jackets and a handful of England team shirts. Seems our boys won't be needing them for this years final anyway. Turn now and test your knowledge!

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It's a CD bonanza with some carefully selected classics like Cliff Hanger, the long awaited film licence. We've also got Dracula Unleashed, Bill Walsh CD and a preview of Mega Race from Mindscape.

DOUBLE SWITCH

56

Is this another ground breaking addition to the now growing list of FMV titles or does this have little more than a few famous names to sell its feeble storyline and effects? Quick! Find out inside.

DR BARRY DIABLO

66

He's growing in popularity and also by several sizes around the waist. Is your question here to be answered by our Golden Joystick winner? Have you won a Ross Electronics infra-red joypad?

ZOMBIES GUIDE

68

The game with the title that frightened a thousand mothers. Zombies Ate My Neighbour is a complex game at the best of times, want the solution?Just turn to the best guide ever created for this Konami classic. Trust Dave to come up with the goods.

MEGA JIVE

78

Ever wanted to grill the editor about something? Ever wanted to tell the world and Sega exactly what you think of the state of the market today? Well now you can with the brightest and perhaps the most controversial column around.

MEGA WORKSHOP

80

Poor old Glen. He thought he could get away with it this month and slink off to do an interesting review. Not so. Paul and Steve quickly grasped the opportunity to dump five new games on the poor guy. Read the result of some extensive testing on the entire Sonic series. Fantastic! Although that's not what Glen said after a week of doing it.

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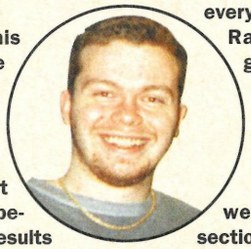
Hello again

'ello. March issue already. It only seems like yesterday since we were packing up for Christmas. After a quiet month for releases last time things have been picking up as the companies begin to vie for shelf space in the spring.



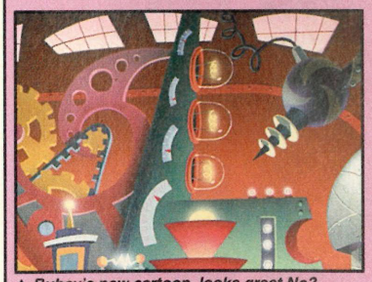
Before we get into this issue properly I'd just like to personally thank each of you that took the time out to fill in last month's Reader Survey. We've learnt an awful lot about you and we'll hopefully be publishing the results in the near future so you can find out what the other people who read Mega Action are like. As a brief pointer though it seems that you really like our Over the Edge section and general layout and as far a freebies go posters and tips books head the list. A surprising number of girls also responded proving that the Mega Drive is popular with both sexes. For a more in-depth run down watch out shortly.

Anyway, what's been happening? This month we wandered off down to Sega's UK headquarters to find out everything on Sonic and Virtua Racing. These guys have got some massive products in the pipeline and these two titles will surely head the charts for months to come.

As far as Mega CD goes we've got another packed section of goodies for you here too. Remember it's simple to find what's what for your machine in Mega Action. Simply turn to either the cart or the CD sections. Everything you need to know is there, right before your eyes. Well, enjoy the magazine and spare a thought for us tonight beavering away on the next issue for you.

Broadcastin' Bubsy

You all remember Bubsy? Bubsy the Bobcat? Of course you do. Well if Accolade have their way then the lovable feline creation will soon be taking to your television screens in more than a dozen cartoon episodes. Bubsy the TV show has yet to be snapped up by any of the companies but if what we've seen continues then there will be several stations fighting over it before long. Yawn! Bored? Well you shouldn't be. You're probably wondering why you bothered to get up on Sunday and watch Sonic on Channel 4. Can Bubsy be any better? Well Accolade have got off to the right start by making sure that the quality of the animation is top notch. In fact to make the whole series will cost in excess of three million quid! And that's a lot of money (you'd have to win the footy pools twice to be able to finance it!).



▲ *Bubsy's new cartoon, looks great No?*

They obviously see their Bobcat as a big winner and with the right marketing there's no reason why it can't take off big-time. In the meantime though you'll just have to keep an eye on your TV schedules but rest assured as soon as we get any dates you'll find them here the second we know about them. Or when the next issue after that goes out anyway.

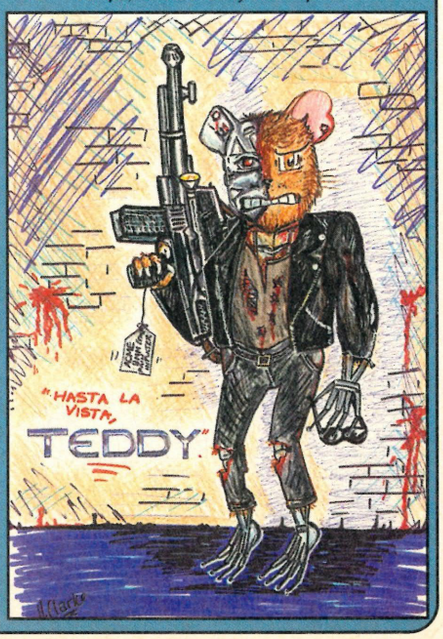
Hasta la vista Teddy

You may remember back in November that we ran a Terminator 2 competition asking you to send in humorous alternatives to Arnie in the role. Anyway we had a stormingly good response and the quality of the pictures was stunning. It's obvious that there are a lot of very talented people knocking about out there.

Anyway, we were so chuffed that people had taken such a long time over their work that we've decided to print you the winning design. Entitled Hasta la vista Teddy it caught our eye because of the care and attention that has been put in and the number of different techniques used.

Anyway, enough arty chat this isn't Take Hart. We'd like a warm round of applause for Miss Vickie J Clarke who's 18 and lives on the Isle of Wight. The standard was high so this is an achievement. Winners (as with all competitions) will have been contacted and prizes will be despatched soon. Apparently some of you don't believe us so from next month we'll print winners' names and addresses.

▼ *Fantastic! The winning entry in our Arnie compo, note the lovely blood splats.*



New gadjit?

Question: On what portable machine can you play Mega CD games, Megadrive cartridges or your favourite tunes?

Answer: The new Sega Multi-Mega CD ROM, due out this summer.

It runs on just 2 AA size batteries, so you could play it anywhere as long as you have a pocket (battery operated) TV, also this little beauty won't drag you down, weighing in at just 1.5lbs (approx), you won't even know it's in your pocket.

"Pocket" I hear you gasp, yes! It'll fit just fine being a mere 7.8 x 5.5 x 1.8 inches in size!

The package comes with one six button pad, a CD game, an MD cart and all the cables and batteries for around £300 - £350. Bargain!

▲ *Slick isn't she? Er Yes.*

Sensible solution

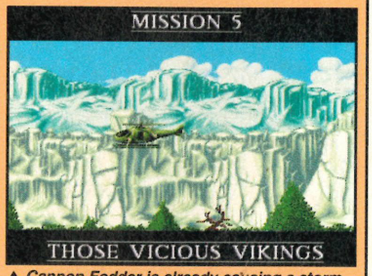
▲ *Famous on all formats will Sensible Golf rival this soccer classic?*

Virgin Interactive have joined forces with the Sensible Software team in an effort to reproduce the arcade strategy game Cannon Fodder for the Mega Drive. The game had chart topping success on the Amiga format over the christmas period, so both companies are hoping for an equal success for the Sega conversion. There's no reasos wh yit shouldn't as without a doubt the title is one of the most innovative, if a little controversial around at the moment.

Cannon Fodder sees you taking command of a platoon of soldiers with the express intention of defeating the enemy in near impossible situations. The game is done with a sense of humour throughout. There's no point in becoming attached to your men because many of them will get wiped out in a horrible spray of blood and guts.

If you're not fond of violence in computer games then this is probably one to avoid but if you like a bit of harmless fun then watch out for this one in a couple of months time.

Meanwhile Virgin and Sensible Software hope to continue their partnership as they start work on their next sports game – a golf sim. Everyone must have heard of their last sports release – Sensible Soccer, which went sky high in every chart possible so there's no reason to believe that this won't do for golf what SS did for footy. Tune in soon for more hot news.



▲ *Cannon Fodder is already causing a storm on the Amiga how will it fair on the MD?*

World gossip

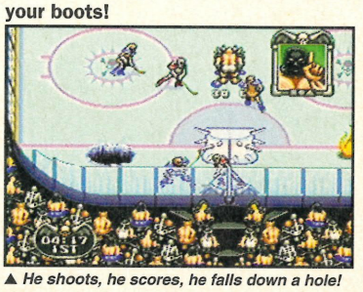
This probably doesn't really concern you but you may well be interested if you like keeping up with world events. The hot goss is that gamers in Japan will soon be able to emulate us lucky Euros now that Spectravideo have just finished tying the final knots in a distribution deal with absolutely massive Japanese multi-billion dollar trading group The Nissho Iwai Corporation.

That's all well and good you're probably saying but how will that affect me? Well not at all, really, but it is a bit of good news to see a British company that does rather well over here, doing rather well over there (I'm sure I heard that on an advert a bit ago!).

Obviously Spectravideo, who'll be trading their Logic 3 range will be up against mighty stiff competition but if you have a decent product then you may as well try and sell it as much as possible. Mega Action wishes them good luck. Good luck!

bagful of stuff ready at the moment. Pretty soon the shelves will be saturated with their stuff and for the most part it's quality gear too. Reviewed in this ish we already have PGA Euro Tour, Skitchin', NBA Showdown '94 and Normy. Steady on! We'll have no pages left.

We can at this moment in time promise you a full in-depth review in next month's issue as we have the cart in the office as we speak. It would have been in this time but we were already packed to the brim when it arrived so you'll have to wait. It's only four weeks so chill your boots!

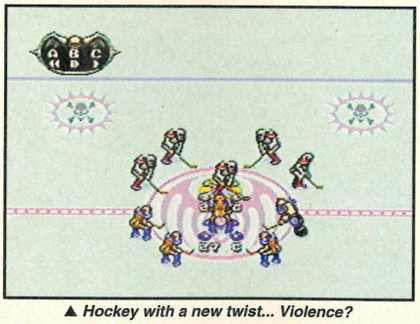


▲ *He shoots, he scores, he falls down a hole!*

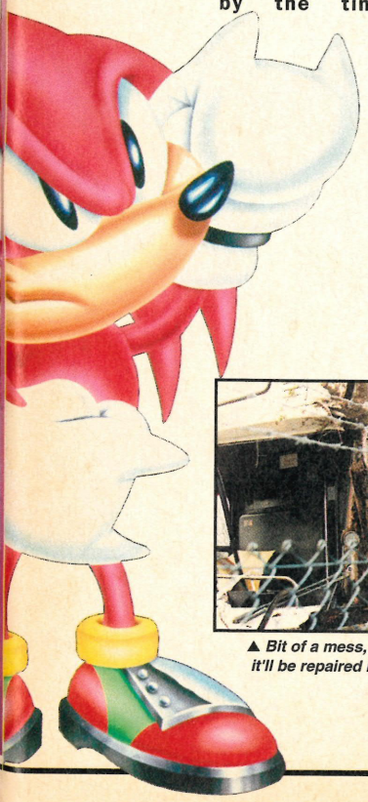
Pucker up!

Right, here's those Mutant League Hockey screenshots we promised you in last month's News. How dare you even think that we aren't true to our words. How dare you! Anyway it looks pretty good to us, but once again you must be prepared to see monster bleeding carcasses lying all over the rink by the time you've finished playing (who said video games were too violent?).

If you've seen Mutant League Footy then you'll have a vague idea of what to expect. EA have a right



▲ *Hockey with a new twist... Violence?*

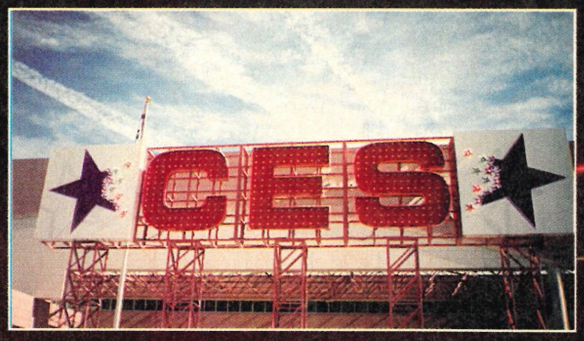


Sonic vroom

Remember those really nice buses that Sega have whenever they pull up to an event. Well guess what, there will be one missing next time as it has had a slight disagreement with the road. Our roving reporters snapped this little incident just outside Macclesfield and on asking the receptionist for some juicy facts were turned away with "it missed the road." Fortunately no one was hurt but we believe a lot of equipment was spread over the area. It's not clear whether the bus will be repaired as it was in quite a state and we understand parts are both rare and quite highly priced. The driver was unavailable for comment.

▲ *Bit of a mess, hopefully it'll be repaired before the summer.*

▲ *Sonic bus: One for the road? Snapped outside Macclesfield earlier this month.*



SHOWTIME IN LA

If Nintendo was reserved about its recent performance, it was noticeably tight-lipped about its future plans to face up to a new bunch of 'big boys' vying for supremacy in the playground.

Electronic giants JVC showcased a new console, Sony wet the palate with the promise of an amazing multi-media machine and the likes of Panasonic's 3DO were as impressive as promised. Add a load of PC-based CD-Rom machines and confusion and apprehension reigned supreme.

Battle-scarred Atari showed it's long but blunted claws with the Jaguar. A cartridge-based console, the Jaguar boasts an almost obscene 64-bit capacity. Will Atari pose a threat? We'll see.

Sega's inimitable, irreverent style boasted an ever-increasing claim of the market over its bitter competitor Nintendo even though independent polls revealed an overall decline in the console/handheld market. Nevertheless, while Nintendo still shows no interest in exploring CD technology, Sega is pulling out all the stops in a bid to stave off a hi-tech army of new machines threatening its market.

Sega's principle character, Sonic the Hedgehog, is set to front the crusade, although the bequiffed rodent's image has been softened for kiddy appeal. A Jeckyl to Sega's irreverent 'in-yer-face' Hyde image aimed at the teen market.

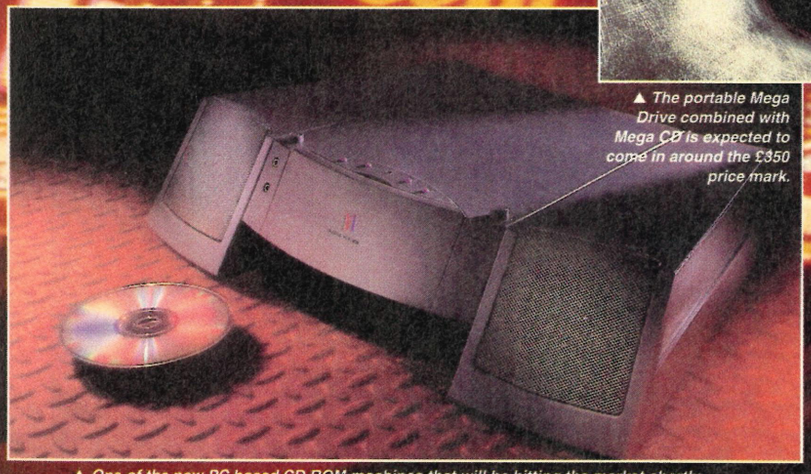
One such vitriolic campaign is to rename the American post yule-tide calendar feature Groundhog Day, (January 6th) as "Hedgehog Day" an annual platform on which to launch the latest Sonic game. Sonic 3, say Sega, is the biggest and boldest adventure ever. Never before seen special stages are promised and you can find out more in the review starting on page 14. Launch date in the U.S. was "Hedgehog Day", of course, Jan 6.

Yet with all this 'new frontiering' much of Sega's show was decidedly retro. The Jurassic park set came out for another airing while existing releases filled a surprising amount of display monitors. Closer investigation revealed boastful messages and boring charts of past commercial performance containing digs at Nintendo. This just seems to hint that Sega is as much in the dark about the future as everyone else.

Sega's other '94 release are a mixed bag of themes. Asterix and the Great Rescue is one of the more surprising licences, Star Trek the Next Generation is expected to

▼ *Atari's Jaguar is the next stage from the former kings of the console market.*

▲ *The portable Mega Drive combined with Mega CD is expected to come in around the £350 price mark.*



▲ *One of the new PC based CD ROM machines that will be hitting the market shortly.*

Once again, the gambling Mecca of the globe, Las Vegas plays home to the summit computer and video game show of the year. Jason Spiller spins the wheel of fortune and takes a look at the Mega Drive and CD market for 94.

S VEGAS

be a big hit on the back of the TV program's popularity. Original concepts come in the shape of Shadowrun, a Blade Runner inspired future thriller, featuring the most remarkable 3D graphics ever seen on consoles and Sub-Terrania, an explosive underworld action game. Both should be released this Spring.

The Simpsons remains the most exploited cartoon licence and Acclaim showcased the best yet, Virtual Bart.

Randy Savage and the Undertaker made an appearance to show their gratitude for Acclaim's commitment to WWF and Royal Rumble (the last WWF game) has been the biggest seller to-date Statesside.

Acclaim also created a buzz over their latest 3D Modelling technique. Bringing CDs literally alive, the technique scans the image of an actor, to make a detailed geometric model. The action is then recorded at Acclaim's motion capture studio. The graphics produced are tremendouly realistic.

Interactive movies proved to be the latest fad for Mega CD, inspired by the coin-op wild west shoot out Mad Dog Mcree from American Laser Games. But while American has found the mix of real-life movie and interactive control works in the arcade, its relevance to home based machine is questionable. Priced at around fifty pounds, Mad Dog Mcree includes a movie using digitized graphics and a sequence of scenarios which progress as the player successfully plugs the bandidos.

The characters range from the town drunk to the undertaker to desperados making whoopee in the town. As the shootout scenario remains the same, a player can soon master it and the game might just be short of lasting appeal.

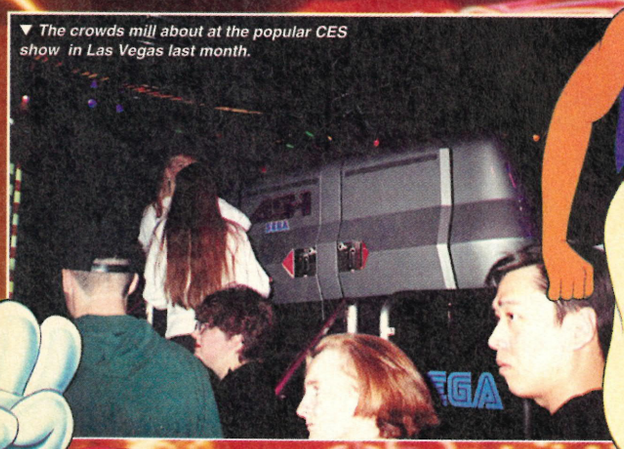
Other game-movies featured at the American stand included Who Shot Johnny Rock and a Mad Dog Mcree sequel going by the surprising name of Mad Dog Mcree 2. With a laser gun available, the gameplay for each game is unlikely to divert from shoot-out action, whether it be wild west or gangster based.

With the incredibly popular classic Disney cartoon, Jungle Book selling by the million on video. Virgin is developing a game based on the story, expected to be released early in the summer.

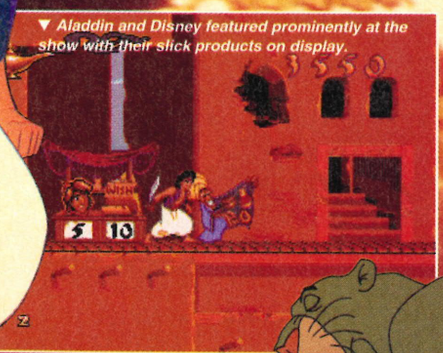
The game is to adhere closely to the plot, with Mowgli meeting all the main characters from the film. The intention is to combine this with traditional platform features such as collecting gems and special weaponry including boomerang bananas. Jungle Book is being developed by the team responsible for the excellent Aladdin.

300 lbs of green rubber and foam lumbered through the halls at CES growling menacingly to innocent

▼ *The crowds mill about at the popular CES show in Las Vegas last month.*



▼ *Aladdin and Disney featured prominently at the show with their slick products on display.*



▲ *I'm the king of the swingers. The Jungle Book is all set to storm the charts everntually.*

▲ *There's nothing quite like a little vine swinging. Jungle Book features all your favourite characters from the film.*

bystanders that the Hulk has been pixelized and he's angry.

US Gold bought the licence to base a platform romp on the favourite Marvel character. Some great touches include Hulky transforming into Banner to sneak into smaller chasms and Hulky's sonic clap where he slams his palms together to create a shock wave that destroys all enemies in range. Hulk should be out in the Spring.

With the new generation of machines aiming at an older age group, Sega seems determined to exploit thet most popular of genres interesting these money-laden older consumers, sport.

Planned for '94 is NFL Football 94 endorsed by the great QB Joe Montana. The prestigious Pebble Beach course has licensed its name for a golf sim that promises to bring proper golf to Sega owners. Pebble Beach Golf Links boasts the kind of features normally associated with top of the range PCs.

Along with golf and gridiron comes a tennis game, Wimbledon Champion Tennis Champions... no guesses as to when this will be released! A new generation of computerized basketball action is planned with NBA Action.

It's Virtua Racing that Sega hope will bring the ackers rolling in. On the virtua stand a line of pretend F1 race cars were occupied by a continuous line of Mansell wannabes. The cars thrust and jolted their occupants to Grand Prix glory or misery. If you turn to page 32 you'll notice the start of our wonderful three-page special preview.

Eager to get on the LA 94 bandwagon Acclaim's World Class Soccer employs all the state-of-the-art tricks. Back Stateside, MBLPA is a spectacular baseball sim featuring TV style presentation which shows close-up action during the game. Also on show, yet another NFL game, succinctly titled NFL Football, which features huge player sprites and exclusive artificial intelligence.

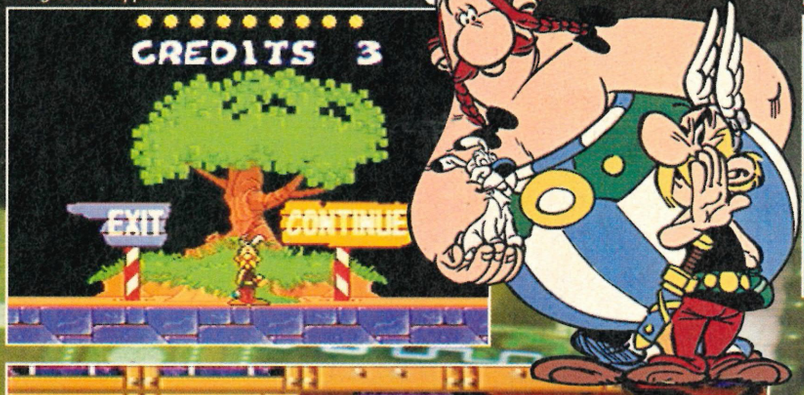
Then, as if further proof was needed that sports game were gonna be big, Accolade showcased a collection of games featuring some of the greatest characters in sport of our time. Pele, the game, was a disappointment. But now Accolade has commissioned a new development team to produce a sequel and this time it had better be as good as it promised to be!

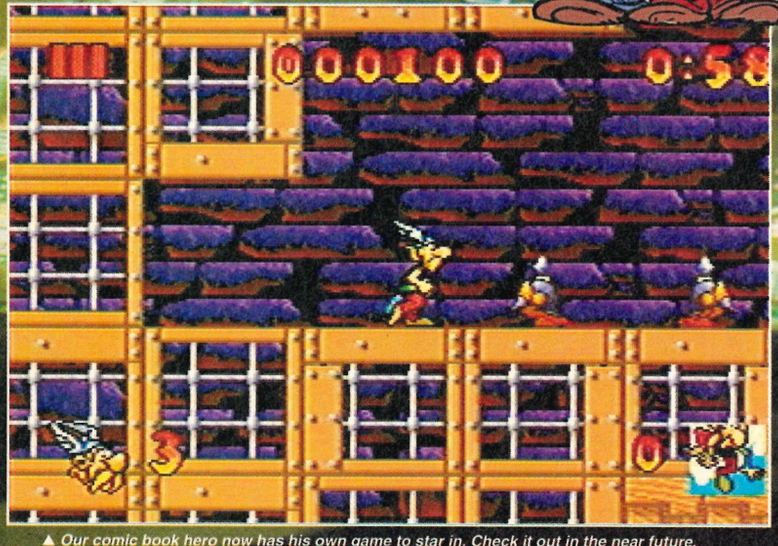
Pele 2 is on the drawing board and the team is analysing recent soccer sims to come up with a dream formula which won't embarrass its illustrious patron. Pele 2 is expected by the latter part of 94.

Accolade is also keen to exploit the latest surge of ice skating interest by signing up hot star Brett Hull. The game is true state-of-the-art design with a remarkably accurate TV style perspective of the game. It features a well-defined, swift and accurate puck and player control.

Accolade's drive to home in on golf mania has them aiming for a game that keen golfers would feel comfortable with.

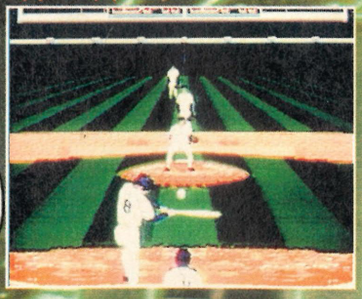
▼ *Asterix is as french as they come but his game will appeal to all nationalities.*

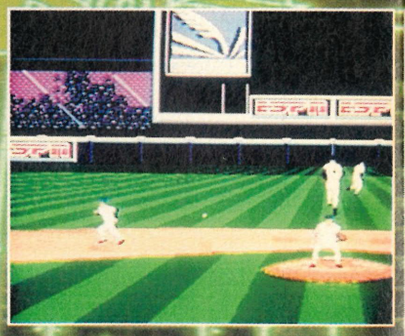




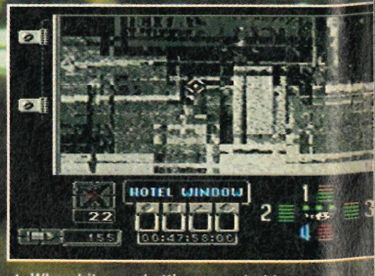
▲ *Our comic book hero now has his own game to star in. Check it out in the near future.*

▼ *Baseball is big business in the States but enjoys less popularity on these shores.*





▲ *Ground Zero Texas is one of the new breed of CD titles worth the money.*



▲ *When hit, your battle-cams start to lose their perfect picture quality.*

■ Anybody who's anybody was at this show. Any product worth its salt was on view to the thousands who turned up. Read on to find all about what you can look to later in the year for your Mega Drive

Signing up revered golf warhorse Jack Nicklaus couldn't have been a better move. "I'm well aware of how intimidating I am in a match!" says Nicklaus, and Accolade is pouring all its resources into developing a proper simulation of game. Should make a nice change from the usual mindless hackarounds littering the console market.

There seems to be an epidemic of basketball titles aimed at showing the rule-breaking, dirty-play side of the game and Virgin's Jammit is a typical example of irreverent behaviour on court. Described as a 'no messing' streetwise game with attitude' Jammit allows hoop enthusiasts to play dirty, including such rule infringements as knocking players down, elbowing and yelling to distract penalty shots.

Some of the taunts you can use include "an I'mmuna charge you like a gold card loc," and "you made me make you look bad!" Scheduled release summer 94, by then I might have figured out what they mean.

Electronics giant Sony Imagesoft looks set to sweep the embarrassment of its inaugural movie licence releases, Last Action Hero and Cliff Hanger, under its large corporate rug. Already this year they've given the world the excellent Ground Zero Texas (a gold award-winner last ish) and are now wading into the incredibly oversubscribed US Sports waters with a baseball sim entitled ESPN Baseball Tonight.

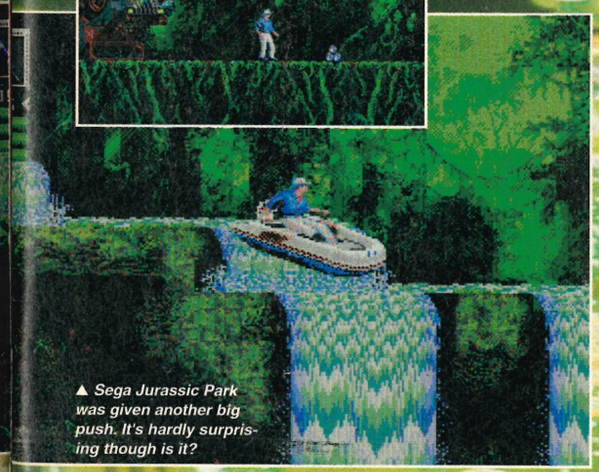
This impressive ball game is presented like TV coverage of the sport, showing all aspects of play during the game and includes some very realistic graphics and a terrific control mechanism. Released on the Mega -drive and CD this Spring, ESPN stars 28 Major League teams with baseball players digitized for greater realism.

Occupying the largest area of any third-party developer in the Sega village, US Gold showcased its two big sport-sim licences World Cup USA 94 and a line-up of games based on the 1996 Olympic Games...talk about the early bird!

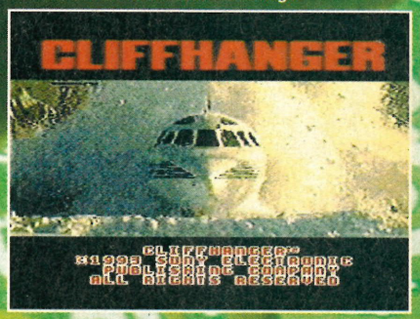
World Cup '94 shuns the current trend of video game soccer to adopt a TV camera perspective and employs the more traditional over-head view. The release date, naturally, is to coincide with the soccer frenzy whipped up by the 94 summit tournament in LA. Pity we're not going to be there.

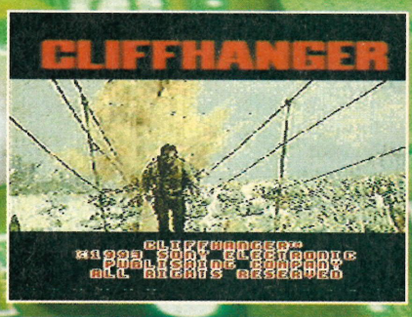
▲ *Virtua Racing was one Mega Drive title that created a storm. It looks like Sega are on to a real winner with this one.*

▼ *Before you start playing Sony's latest CD release, check out the real film footage.*



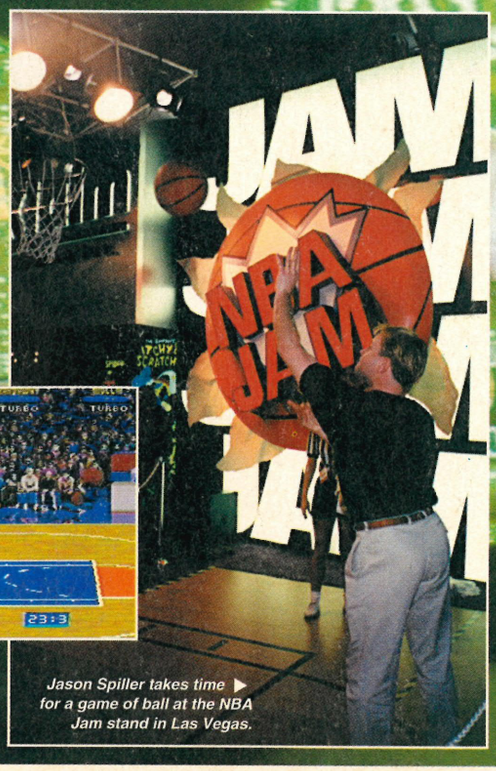
▲ *Sega Jurassic Park was given another big push. It's hardly surprising though is it?*





▲ *Clips of the actual film have been digitised on to CD to create a smart little intro for use with your MCD.*

◀ *NBA Jam: The best basketball sim for the MD to date? See the review.*



Jason Spiller takes time ▶ for a game of ball at the NBA Jam stand in Las Vegas.

From Michaelangelo's Fantasy World...

to Donatello's Futuristic City, the Turtles transcend time through to another dimension, in this, the ultimate confrontational fighting game.

TEENAGE MUTANT HERO TURTLES®

TOURNAMENT FIGHTERS

SEGA MEGA DRIVE

SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

KONAMI

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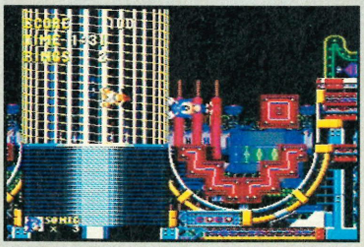
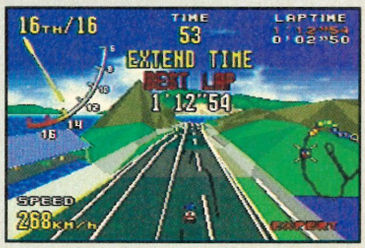


▲ *Sonic 3: The definitive review featuring all the new levels and features that are included.*

▲ *Madness – House of fun: Put on your Baggy Trousers for the next stage of licensing.*



▲ *Virtua Racing: The greatest race game of all time gets a three-page special this month.*

cartridge section

On the following pages you'll find all you need to know about the latest, the greatest and not so smart carts that have been or about to be released. In this month's we feature a massive four page review of Sonic 3, Virtua Racing, NBA Jam, Lost Vikings, Madness plus many more.

OFFICIAL

PUBLISHER
Sega
RELEASE DATE
March
PRICE
£44.99

SONIC 3

The most eagerly awaited Mega Drive game since Sonic 2 finally arrives with six new levels in the battle against the nasty Robotnik.

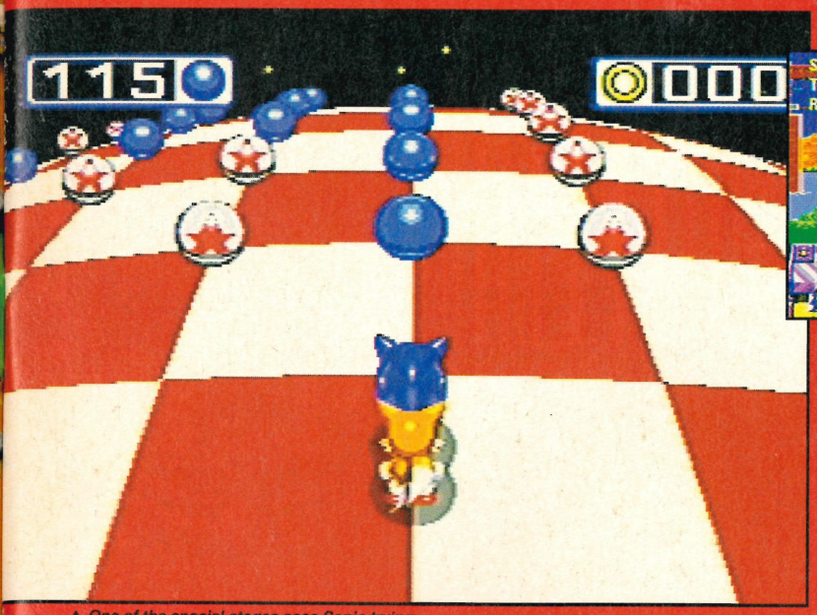
Sonic has now appeared in five games but did not appear in Dr. Robotnik's Mean Bean Machine.

Rumours have it that this will be the final Sonic game for the Mega Drive. If that's to be the case then I guess this third cartridge game in the saga cries out to be something special.

With everything that has gone before it, the Sonic character needs no introducing. He is a figurehead worldwide – the most popular video game creation of all time. Sonic sells. Sega knows it, you know it. This game will sell, probably by the million, regardless of what any reviewer says about it. Where spiky blue hedgehogs are concerned, Sonic is simply the best, no competition.

Sonic the Hedgehog 3 is the type of game that will be praised highly and will also receive the odd bit of 'controversial' criticism. When the first game came out a few years back some people said it was too easy. The second was fingered for being similar to the first and, to be honest, the third doesn't move away from the successful formula either! Why should it? People love the formula and surely that's what counts!

So what's been going on then? We've had Sonic CD and Sonic Spinball to take our minds off the lack of an actual new adventure but now it's here is it worth the wait?



▲ One of the special stages sees Sonic trying to collect all the blue balls within the time.

▲ It's Knuckles' island and he'll make sure that Sonic knows it before the end.

Well, yes actually. Sonic 3 is destined to become Sega's biggest success story to date.

If you were smart enough to finish Sonic 2 you'll remember that you'd just defeated Dr. Robotnik and his Death Egg thingie. Anyway, Robotnik has crash landed on a small piece of land known as The Floating Island which just happens to be suspended in the sky by the power of the Chaos Emeralds.

Sonic, ready to continue the relentless pursuit of his arch enemy, runs into a problem. Unfortunately, the island's keeper, a strange pink echidna (that's an Australian, spiny ant-eater that is), has been conned by Robotnik into believing that Sonic is really trying to take over the island. So he's been doing everything in his power to stop you too. As if things weren't tricky enough in the first place! Still, better get on with it.

Instantly noticeable are the graphics. They've been improved and the characters are now slightly bigger and better defined than before. Sonic is still Sonic, Tails is still Tails but for some reason everything looks just that little bit clearer.

There are six levels in the one-player game and these are far bigger than in previous games. Along with this come several new features not even seen on the CD before. The most apparent one of these is the ability of a second player to operate little Tails.

Using Tails can come in exceedingly useful when Sonic falls a great distance. Tails can simply be brought into the action by picking up the other joypad.

TIP

When Tails is trying to pick you up first let him take off before jumping straight up into his hands where he'll catch you.

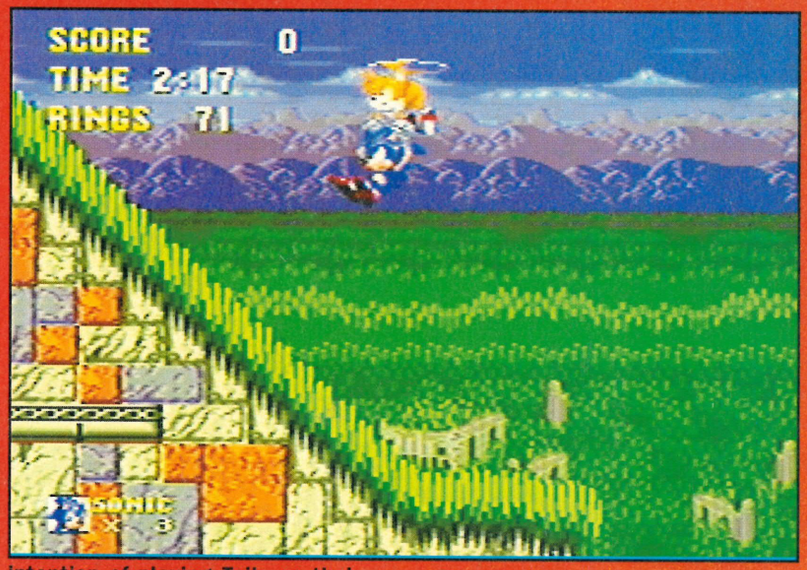
Due to his flying skills, our foxy friend can link paws with Sonic and airlift him from danger. It's quite tricky to perfect, but once you've got the hang of it you can escape from many a sticky situation. Having said that, it isn't really worthwhile having somebody around with the specific intention of playing Tails as their overall involvement would be a bit limited to say the least.

There have always been moving platforms in the Sonic games but in this third one there are several ways to traverse the zones. Rope slides and pulleys can now be leapt upon in order to avoid some of the trickier obstacles. Having said that it does require some precision timing to actually get on the damn things at times but it's usually worth it in the end as it can save a lot of hassle.

As usual there are rings dotted all around the levels. Picking these up provides Sonic with a form of immunity against dying. as you probably already know, if Sonic gets hit while carrying rings he simply drops them all. If he gets hit while ringless well that's loss of life time! It is still possible to die by falling off the bottom of the screen or by drowning but this is largely down to stupidity or rushing things rather than anything else.

▼ The Turbo Lifts can be used to transport you around the tricky Launch Base level

▼ Tails begins to get bored by Sonic's balancing capabilities. Look at the facial expressions.



▲ Tails can airlift the hedgehog if a second player comes to join in the fun.

▲ The split-screen mode sees two characters involved in a race of laps over a new zone.

▼ Sonic goes into a spin in a bid to defeat his closest enemies before they can react.

▲ In Sonic 3, our hedgehog can go snowboarding down the trecherous snowy slopes.

▲ Icecap Zone contains many hazards but these swinging platforms can prove helpful.

We've already mentioned that Sonic can get around using slides and so on but there are other, less obvious ways, of interacting with the scenery. For example on the Carnival Nights level there are cannons dotted around the landscape. Sonic can clamber into the barrel and launch himself across the zone to areas he could not otherwise reach.

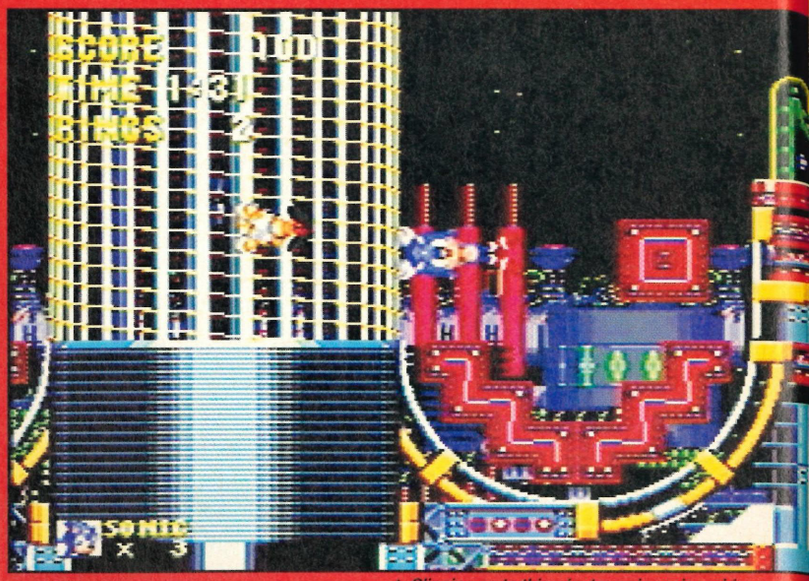
Sometimes, if Tails is in the area, he joins you in the cannon and the two friends are blasted away. Tails, the silly sod, usually misses the mark and ends up in completely the wrong place but it's worth doing for a laugh anyway.

As you can see from some of the screenshots the characters are as beautifully crafted as ever. The facial expressions on the pair of them seems just about as cartoon-like as possible.

Perhaps the big question though is whether Sonic 3 is too easy. As mentioned earlier this is certainly a criticism thrown at the earlier games. The threequel is much larger than before but experienced gamers could get through it pretty quickly, although not as quickly as the first two Sonic games.

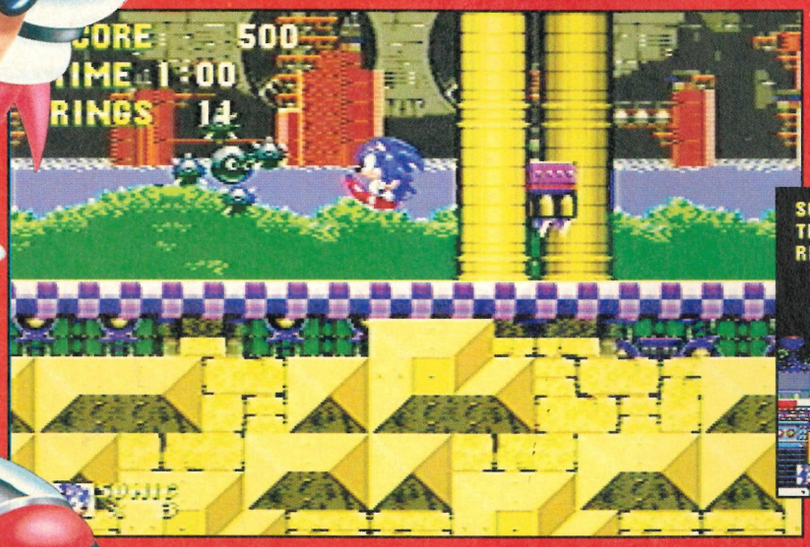
To really play the game takes a lot more than dashing through the levels avoiding everything. Playing Sonic 3 to its maximum potential takes an awful lot longer than just skipping through to the end, it should provide you with many more hours of enjoyment after you've first completed it.

Collecting the Chaos Emeralds is tricky, a real challenge, but is essential if you intend to play seriously, which after a while you will.



▲ *Clinging on to this wire tower is easier said than done. You'll soon fly off.*

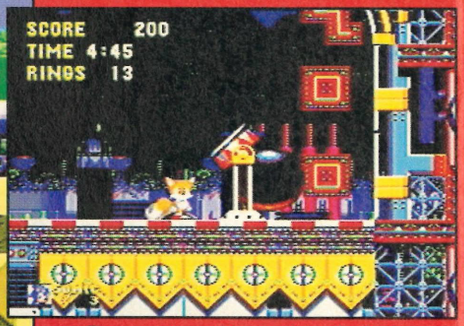
▼ *There are many surprises on the Launch Base Zone.*



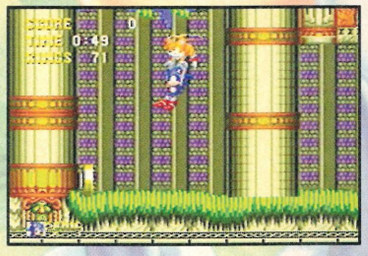
In the previous Sonic games you had to collect a set number of rings and then finish a level in order to get to the special zones. Sonic 3 reduces the frustration factor of losing all your rings seconds before the end. You don't have to collect hundreds to reach the bonus level.

Instead, on your travels you might come across a huge golden, spinning ring, usually hidden away. Jumping through that lets you into the 3D spinning special zone that you've probably already seen pictures of.

Once here, the game objective changes. Now Sonic has to sprint



▲ *The cannons can be operated to fire Sonic across the landscape to special areas.*



ANGEL ISLAND

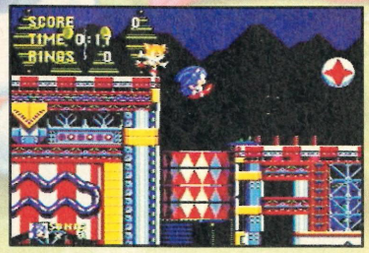
The first zone is Angel Island and it looks a bit like the Green Hill zones on the other games in places. The enemies are better defined though and there are one or two tricks throughout the Acts. It's a perfect introduction to Sonic 3 really. Not too taxing and fun to play.

HYDROCITY

For the most part this is underwater and features an array of mini-windmills that flip Sonic and Tails about like crazy. It's all getting a little trickier by this stage but with a little bit of care it's pretty easy to get through. Good special effects too.

MARBLE GARDEN

Nice, green and stunning. The graphics here are out of this world. This level epitomises what Sonic the Hedgehog is about with speed, rings and Badniks galore. Lots of steep slopes to build up some real speed. It's getting trickier by this stage mind.



CARNIVAL NIGHT

One of the most unusual levels, Carnival Night contains cannons which Sonic can climb into before blasting himself across several screens to areas previously unaccessible, maybe even to the Special Zones that lie hidden behind some of the scenery.

STEVE'S OPINION

Is this the last we shall see of our spikey hero? Rumour abound that this is the last MEGA DRIVE game for the hedgehog to explore, later versions will be confined to the mythical Saturn that we hear so much about. All the teeny problems and playability confusions have been eradicated, the backdrops improved and the end result is more spectacular than ever. All in all, a very playable game that for once in a Sonic platform varient you must actually play rather than let the whole thing play itself. Nice one Sega!

around collecting baubles of one colour while trying desperately to avoid those of another. The colours change depending on the stage, so you'll just have to figure out which is which for yourself! This can get extremely taxing later on but is great fun nonetheless. It's also one of the best looking sections of the game.

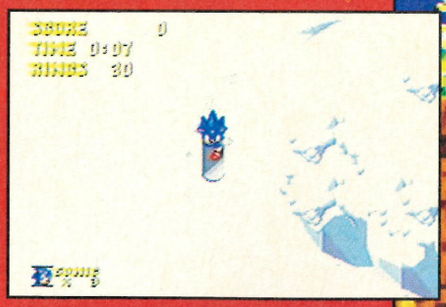
Another feature introduced in Sonic 2 but greatly improved upon is the split screen two-player mode. Now there's the option to play as either Sonic, Tails or Knuckles.

All the characters move at different speeds which allows novice players to match up against experts and race them fairly. New sets of courses have been included for this section and these are raced over in a sort of lap format. It's all plenty of extra fun and effectively ices an extremely tasty cake!

The only other major feature to note is the inclusion of a battery back-up so you can now save your game and not have to wade through zone after zone time and time again. Don't be fooled though, as it doesn't save the your position on the level, it just allows you to restart the zone. Still, that's better than nothing though, so be grateful .

This is the type of game that when your friends come round and you get your Mega Drive out the first thing they'll ask is "Have you got Sonic 3?" That's the impact this will have.

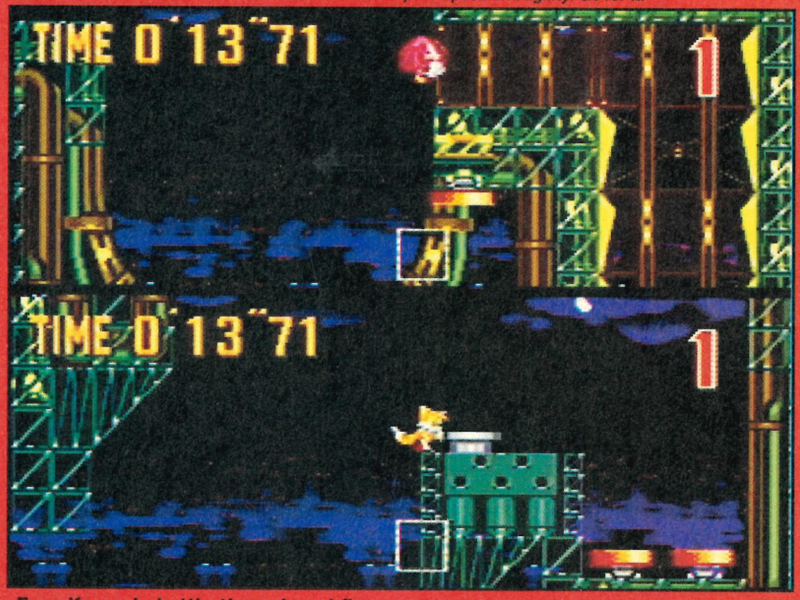
▼ *Sonic speeds down the slopes any way he can. You don't need much control here.*



▲ *The wind tunnels in Hydrocity will blow our heroes all over the show.*

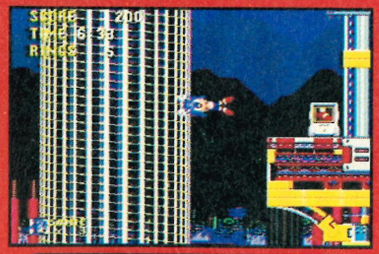
▲ *The old ring loops are back for more in this third episode of Sonic the Hedgehog.*

▼ *Tails takes on Knuckles in a five lap race of pure speed and agility. Go for it!*

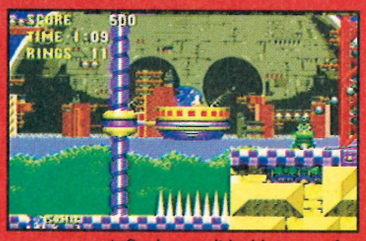


▲ *A huge spout of water gushes up and blows Sonic and Tails high into the air.*

▼ *Clingling on for dear life Sonic attempts to get as high on the wire tower as possible.*



Even if you do battle through and finish the whole thing, you'll still come back and play it again. That, my friends, is when you know you've bought a class product.



▲ *Sonic can sit inside some of the transport methods.*

LAUNCH BASE

When you reach this then you know you're good. Watch out for the alarms. Step between them and a siren goes off and you soon get attacked by a dive-bombing Badnik army. To complete this you have to be good. To complete it properly, you must be the best.

GLEN'S OPINION

All the Sonic programmers have now been set free from the hidden locations where they spent night and day perfecting the little hegehog's third platform romp. There's plenty to keep you occupied as the guy who has more spin than a fully automatic washer/dryer ventures into new worlds, all containing some super duper power-ups, and nifty 3D bonus sections. (My fave bit of the game) Sega really want to majorly impress the console world with this and I think they might've pulled it off. You've been warned!

I don't like giving scores of more than 90. It has to be a pretty special game to get that, as no matter how good a title is, chances are it'll be bettered within the year. Sonic 3 is an exception to that little rule though. It genuinely is a good game. Strip away all the hype and you still have a classic. It's the best of the Sonic games to date. Anyone who slags this off for the sake of being controversial should be locked in a room and forced to play Mario games all day!

MEGA

SOUND

GRAPHICS

ADDICTIVENESS

PLAYABILITY

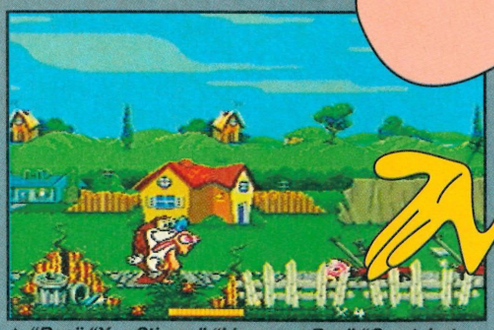
OVERALL

93%

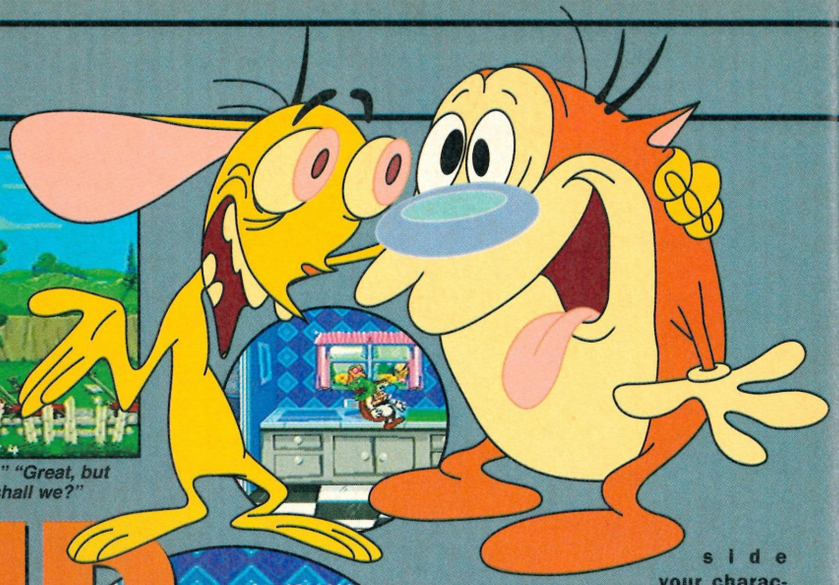
GOLD

IMPORT

PUBLISHER
Sega
RELEASE DATE
March
PRICE
£44.99



▲ "Ren" "Yes Stimpy" "I love you Ren" "Great, but let's try and build the Mutate-O-Matic shall we?"



REN AND STIMPY

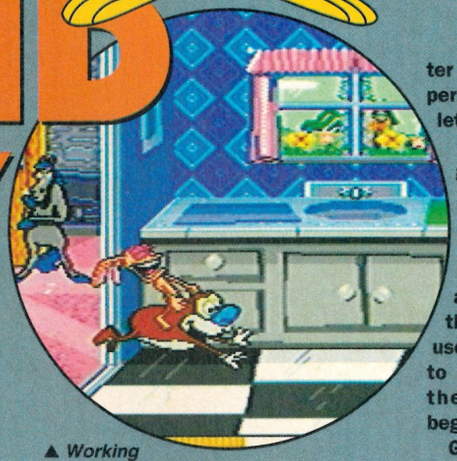
Steempy, we have a veedeo game named after us! Oh Joy! Ren, I'm so happy!

Chances are by this stage you'll have caught an extremely bizarre cartoon series that's been showing on the telly for the past few weeks. Ren & Stimpy is quite unlike anything seen before on our screens and is a sort of meld between one of those obscure Belgian animation series and a high quality American production.

Anyway a cartridge version is now here. Ren & Stimpy has been under production for quite some time now and these two unique characters have been transformed into sprites and now embark upon their very own Sega adventure.

TIP
Use the character you're not controlling to help you whenever you get stuck. Chances are, they can find a way.

A rough gist of the plotline sees our heroes searching through the levels to find all the accessories to make Stimpy's brand new invention – The Mutate-O-Matic. Now's probably the right time to describe the two characters. Ren is a small, ugly, vicious Chihuahua who speaks with a Latin American accent while Stimpy is a Cat and is the classic cartoon sidekick – yes he's thick and generally very stooopid.



▲ Working with your partner in the correct manner can bring you, and them, untold joy.

The game is played out in a platform scenario (just for a change) and you can control either of the two pals in their quest for the parts.

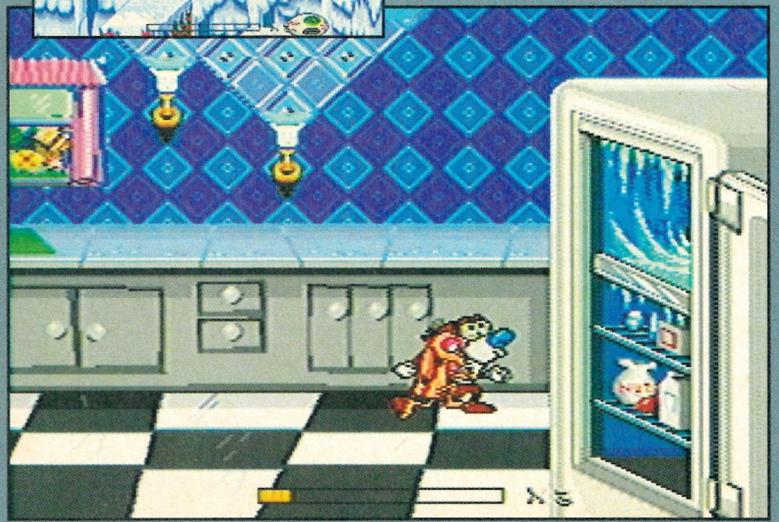
Whoever you decide to operate initially is irrelevant as you can change it at any point during the game. This is essential as each has their own characteristics which must be utilised at different points of the game in order to get to those sections that may have seemed previously unreachable. Whichever buddy isn't under your control lollops alongside your character and can be used as a prop when performimg certain manoeuvres. But let's talk about that later on.

Initially, when you first pick the game up it's easy to sit back, scratch your head and ask yourself what on earth is going on. The first level will seem to be a matter of falling down crevices and losing energy. It's only when the realisation dawns that you can use the other character as a utensil to propel yourself over things that the mentality behind the game begins to click in.

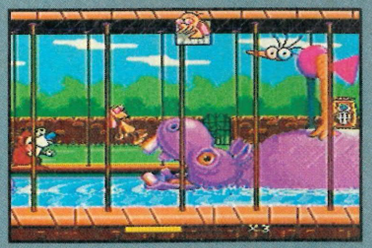
Graphically the game is what you'd expect. A lot of time and effort has been put in and the video game version looks as much like the cartoon as you could possibly expect. The character likenesses are excellent. Everything down to the facial expressions are spot on.

Ren & Stimpy fails to make it as a classic for reasons I can't quite put my finger on. It's a more than competent product but that certain something is missing. Hopefully the sequel will be better.

▼ No wonder Stimpy looks worried, he's just killed Ren. Stoopid Stimpy.



▲ Oh no! Stimpy's spotted a fridge, that's that for ten minutes then.



▲ No-one could ever say the graphics were dull.

Weird this one because I don't actually like it and yet I played it for a whole weekend. If you strip away the pretty graphics it isn't really anything other than a frustrating platform game with nothing particularly new to offer. There is plenty of scope for a sequel though and it may well turn out that this second game, if it ever appears, will be much better. It's deinitely not as good as the superb cartoon series. By all means check this out as it certainly isn't a bad product, it's just not really anything too special. ■ PAUL

MEGA

SOUND

GRAPHICS

ADDICTIVENESS

PLAYABILITY

OVERALL
78%

■ You can watch Ren and Stimpy on BBC2. They're on at 6:25 PM Mondays and Midnight Fridays.

IMPORT

PUBLISHER
Electronic Arts
RELEASE DATE
March
PRICE
£44.99

◀ *This dude tries to flog you a set of dodgy wheels. Still, ya gotta start somewhere kid.*

Call the ▶ fashion police! leather studs and hoop ear-rings!

▼ *Doing little tricks like this racks up the bonus scores. YEEHAH!*

SKITCHIN'

■ Fancy donning some roller blades and hanging on the back of passing cars? I think not.

Road Rash was a tremendous success. Road Rash II was even better. So when the boys responsible for these two titles come up with something new it's definitely worth looking at.

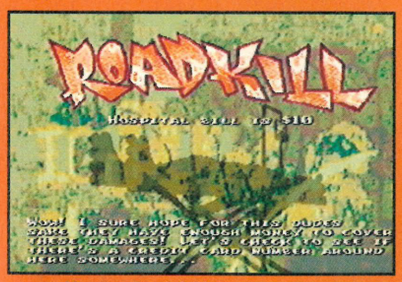
Skitchin' is definitely something new. Billed as a new craze sweeping the States, it's the kind of sport best kept to video games. When you switch Skitchin' on a large warning message comes up telling you not to try it out for yourself or you'll end up dead.

TIP
Don't bother going for bonuses if there's the possibility of grabbing hold of a passing car and moving up.

So what is this sport that carries such hazardous health warnings? Well, Skitchin' is a cross between skating and hitching. The idea being to grasp hold of bumpers of passing vehicles and let them pull you along at breakneck (apt description) speeds.

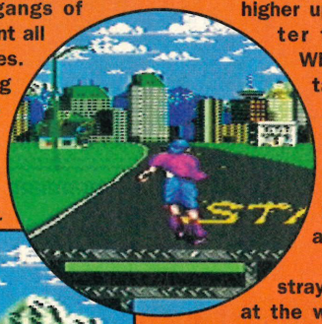
Sounds a bit sad doesn't it but it's actually quite fun to play. Now it just so happens that the National Championships have arrived (naturally they're illegal though!) and you fancy your chances of raking in some extra pocket money and winning the hearts of all the skate babes throughout America.

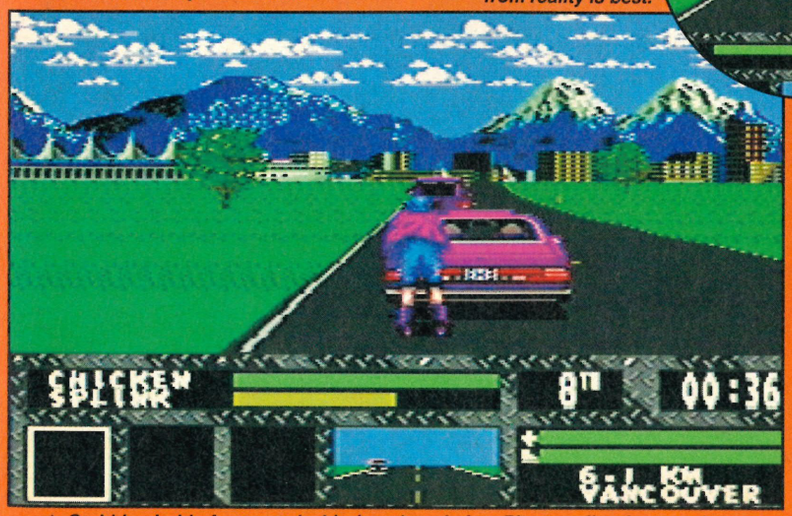
The scene is set then to skitch across the cities of the USA. Matters are complicated by gangs of rival skitchers who want all the glory for themselves. They'll stop at nothing to get you out of the way, so you must be ruthless to succeed.



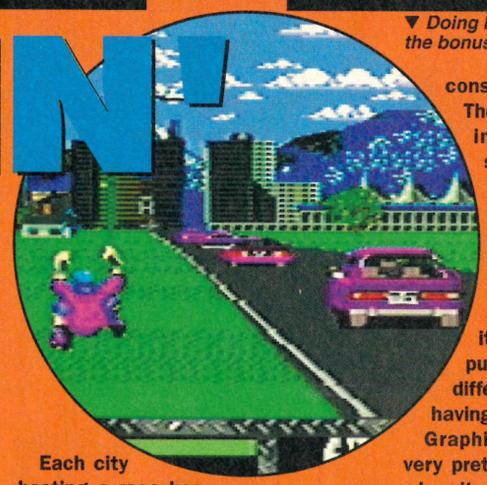
▲ *You're dead. It'll cost you $10 to be resurrected. Only in America...*

Sometimes, escapin' ▶ from reality is best.





▲ *Grabbing hold of a car and whizzing along is fun. Pity you die when you let go.*



Each city hosting a race has different characteristics and different gangs skitchin' the streets. Every other Skitcher out there wants to see you flat on your backside at the side of the road.

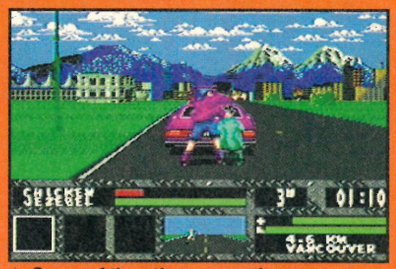
As with Road Rash various items of weaponry can be collected and used against the other skaters if they get in your way. Chains, bats and a whole host of other nasty pieces of equipment can be picked up and utilised.

The only way to progress in the game is to finish a race in one of the top four positions. Obviously the higher up you finish the better the cash prize is. While racing it's important to keep a close eye on the mirror at the bottom of the screen as this provides information as to where the cars are coming from.

If you happen to stray into the wrong lane at the wrong time you may find a vehicle mowing you down from behind. There are no considerate drivers in America. They'll plough through anybody in the way without even a second thought.

Along the roadway ramps are positioned and these can be used to perform stunts. It's always a risk to go for a stunt if it involves letting go of a vehicle. While it provides extra cash if you pull it off it can also mean the difference between qualifying or having to repeat a race.

Graphically and sonically it's all very pretty but that's not everything when it comes to designing the perfe ct cart, as you'll see when you read the comment!



▲ *Some of the other competitors seem to have an unhealthy armpit fetish.*

Yes well it's all very nice looking and at first I was really enjoying myself. There are several nice touches but I just found things getting boring when actually connected to a car over a long period rather than smashing the C button to beat people up occasionally. A lot of effort has obviously been put into Skitchin' but it may be that the programmers have tried to be a bit too smart in their quest to be original. A good game in many respects but definitely with one or two glaring gameplay flaws! ■ **PAUL**

MEGA

SOUND
GRAPHICS
ADDICTIVENESS
PLAYABILITY
OVERALL
82%

■ *Skitchin' is almost as dangerous as the fictional sport of Rollerball – A cross between ice hockey, gridiron and well, murder.*

OFFICIAL

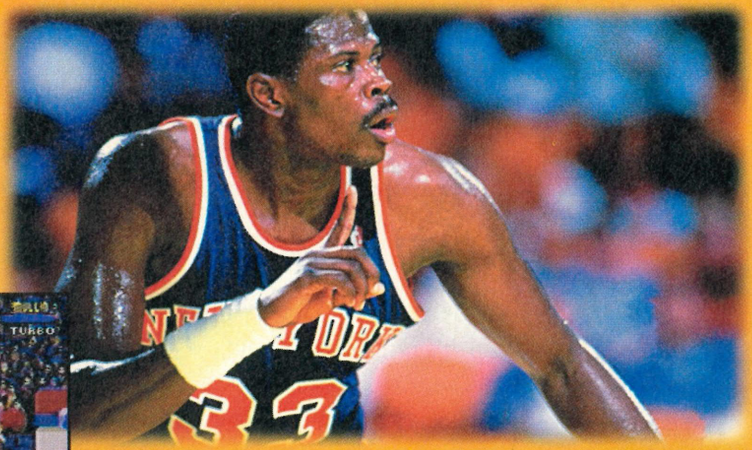
PUBLISHER
Acclaim
RELEASE DATE
March
PRICE
£44.99

NBA JAM

If you thought speed dribbling was just for babies, prepare to slam dunk your way into Basketball stardom.

▼ IThe half time whistle's blown so it's time to get the low down on the game so far.

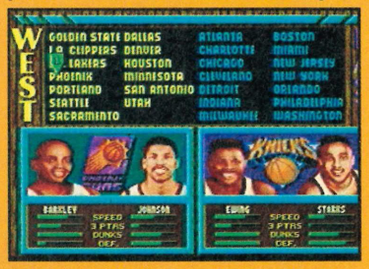
▼ Standing around watching your opponent sink a basket is not the idea of the game.



All the American sports have highly respected stars in each game, and basketball is no different. Take Michael Jordan, one-time NBA star and Nike's main sponsor, he's like a icon to millions of American teenagers who envy his speed, accuracy and large collection of Nike trainers.

Magic Johnson, before Jordan came along, was the biggest star inthe NBA. Now sadly retired after contracting the HIV virus, you can get him back into action courtesty of NBA Jam. Johnson is just one of the 54 NBA stars (you may be a little surprised at the skin colouring of some of these) that you can choose to control on the court.

To help you select the player right for you in the choice screen you can get a quick run down on the statistics for each team member. All the players have different skill levels in each of the techniques required for professional basketball. Not only do they need excellent shooting skills but also good defensive abilities.

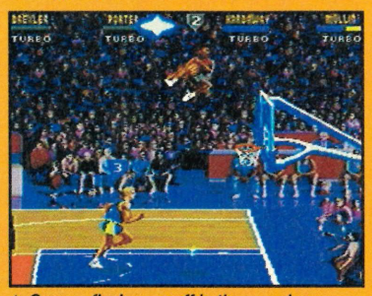


▲ View the individual stats for each player as you select from the 28 different teams.

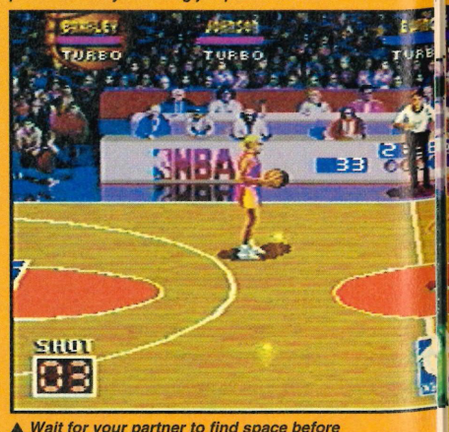
When you lose posession of the ball your opponents tend, for some strange reason to leg it up the court and try and score themselves. Most unsporting. Your role now, is to play defense. You can stop the other guy scoring either by dancing wildly in front of the attacker or by jumping up after they have thrown the ball resulting in a block of some kind or another. If your blocking attempt rebounds on you and the shot goes up, and misses, grab the rebound!

On-court action is quick, players, helped by a quick turbo boost, can really fly around the court. Be

▼ Leave the defenders in mid–air as you make your way to the hoop for another basket.



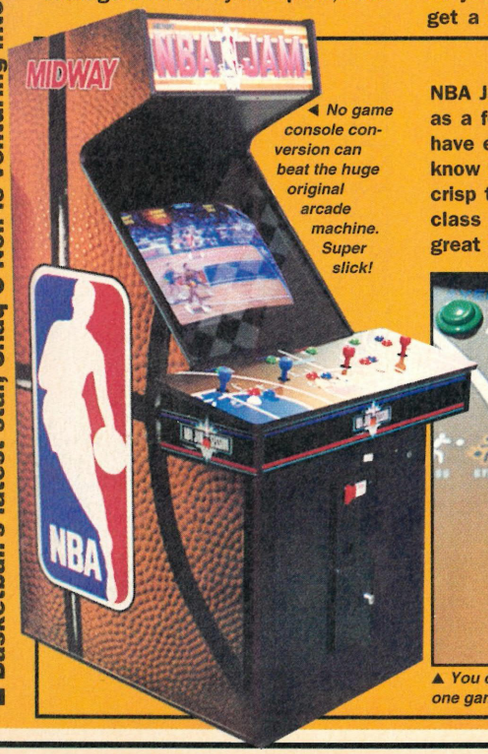
▲ Camera flashes go off in the crowd as you pull off a really stunning jump at the basket.



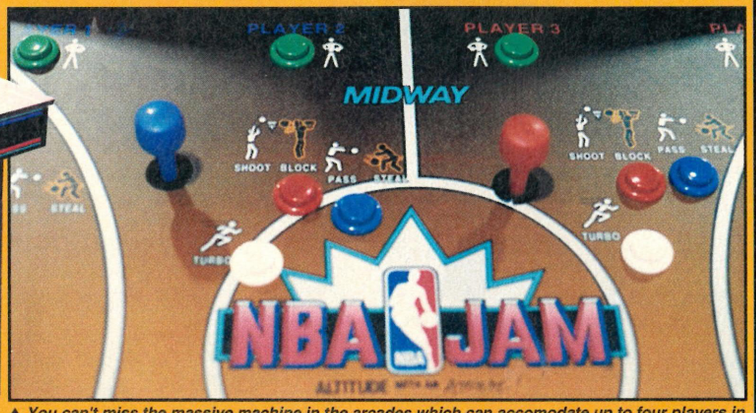
▲ Wait for your partner to find space before passing otherwise you'll lose possesion.

FRENZIED FOURPLAY

NBA Jam originally started out in life as a four player arcade game. If you have ever played the arcade you will know how smoothly it runs and how crisp the sound is. Playability is first class and the multiplayer choice is great fun. Well all this has been covered in the conversion, the Mega Drive cartridge has had all the games star qualities passed on to it, so if you are a fan of the sport and you can't afford the expense of buying your own arcade machine, you'll have to get Jammin' on the MD.



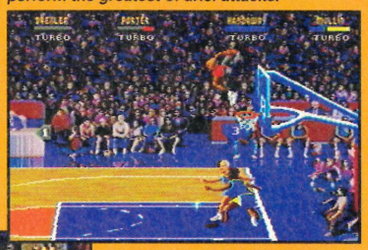
◀ No game console conversion can beat the huge original arcade machine. Super slick!



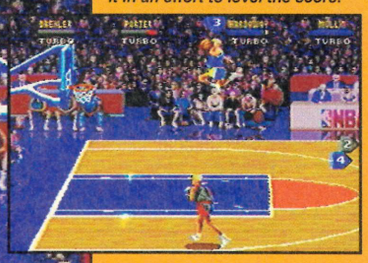
▲ You can't miss the massive machine in the arcades which can accomodate up to four players in one game. All the controls have been closely copied for the conversion to the Mega Drive format.

■ Basketball's latest star, Shaq O'Neil is venturing into the charts by releasing an album called 'I know I got skillz'.

▼ Power up your turbo enough so you can perform the greatest of ariel attacks.



▼ This guy has made a brake for it in an effort to level the score.



warned, if you take your time in making a pass an opponent will knock the ball from your hands before you can say "gosh isn't he tall for his age".

The only noticeable difference between this cart and a real game of basketball is the fact that this is two-on-two. This doesn't really cause a problem as too many characters running about the screen would only result in confusion. The skill of the programmers means that nothing is lost through sacrificing authenticity. The action is hectic enough with only two guys on each team and offers a greater challenge than would a five-on-five sim. Well, probably anyway.

Once you work out the special jumps lauching your man high into the air before jammin' it home you begin to feel the numbness of addiction creeping into your bones. This is a helluva multi-player game.

▼ If you fire a long shot then get underneath the hoop in case it misses and rebounds.

▼ Move in on your opponent with some one–on–one marking.

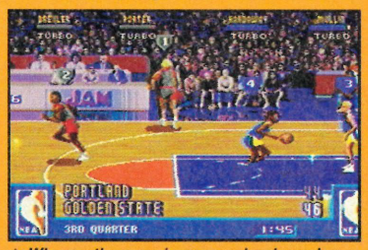
▼ During the half time report, you can compare each of the four players statistics for the first half. This way you and your friends can actually see who has the best ball control.

With some of the moves you can spin your man round while in mid-air or jump about 20 foot and slam dunk the ball through the hoop. Not entirely realistic, but fantastic fun. The finest move that you can complete on the court has to be the backboard breaker. A stunning move that not only scores valuable points but also shatters the backboard into thousands of fragments. What a crowd pleaser. For the special shots you have to charge up the amount of turbo you want to use then press the C button. The most spectacular dunks aren't achieved by holding down the turbo forever.

TIP

Making long runs down the court on your own increases the chance of you losing posession, so keep passing the ball!

Surprisingly enough, ie not at all, the game uses adapted NBA rules. The three-point line is there but games are made up of just three, rather than the usual twelve minute quarters. During real games scores can go through the roof, and can here too. The better you get the more you tend to score (unless you're playing someone like our undefeated Production Editor Ian who concentrates on messing up your game and scoring on the break, a really annoying way to play).

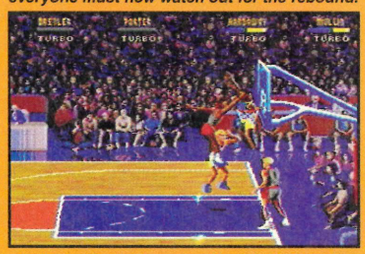


▲ Why are the guys in grey and red running from the ball. Must be newcomers to the sport.

▲ After a basket is scored the players must leg it back to their zone before play comences.

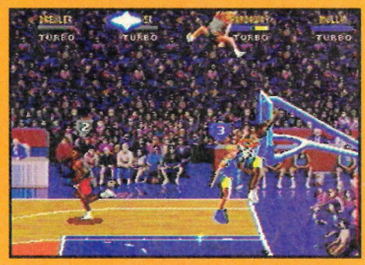
▲ Wow! This guy must have been eating extra portions of sprouts to get this high.

▼ The defence have attempted the block so everyone must now watch out for the rebound.



To get even more fun from this game, drag three of your mates round and get hold of a four player adaptor and plug into hours of fast paced, ball bouncing mayhem. Playing against fellow mortals provides a much better challenge.

With two players you have the option either to compete against each other or combine your talents and become a dynamic duo with devastating ball control. Oh yeah, if you think you'll be playing this against your mates it's a good idea to get in a sneaky bit of practice first. It will take you a while to get in the swing of things and those first few minutes are pretty vital. So to stop the score going against you, practice.



▲ Do all basketball players eat sprouts? This guy's jumped so high he's nearly in orbit!

MEGA

SOUND

GRAPHICS

ADDICTIVENESS

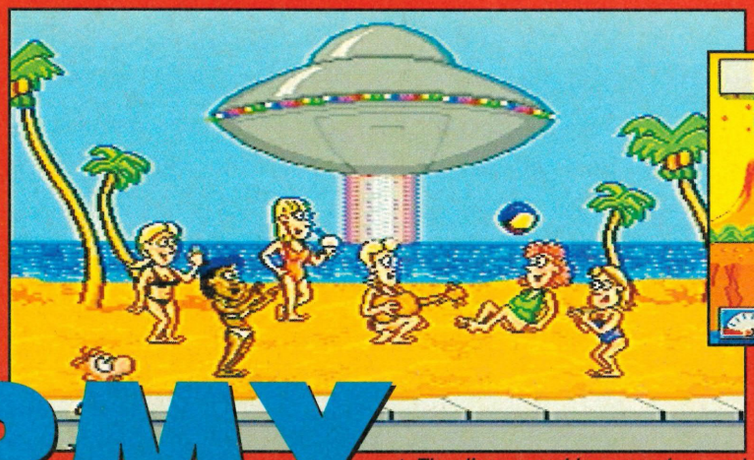
PLAYABILITY

OVERALL 82%

If first impressions are anything to go off, then this game looks great. Whether you're a novice or a pro when it comes to sports games, this will keep you busy for quite a while. Because the playing area of the court is relatively small in comparison to other games, there is a higher boredom factor than with usual games. But this could be said about most sports simulations. But the game does have great pace, and combined with the agile spirtes you're left with a pretty cool conversion. Ideal for any budding basketball hopefuls out there. ■ **GLEN**

IMPORT

PUBLISHER
Electronic Arts
RELEASE DATE
April
PRICE
£39.99



▲ The alien spaceship comes down and captures all those wonderful babes!

▼ Normy goes into dash mode and sprints until he pants with exhaustion.

NORMY

It's not the most appealing sounding of names is it? But EA have high hopes for the geek.

If you were reading last month's issue of Mega Action then you'd have seen all about Normy – a strange new character with a sexy old platform game based entirely around him. Anyway we promised you a review in this issue and hey folks, here it is.

EA have a rare old bundle of goodies on offer at the moment and are surely one of the most consistent software houses doing Mega Drive stuff at the moment. Anyway, Normy is part of their latest batch of game releases.

The gist of the story is that Normy is a bit of an all-round geek. One day while walking around near the beach he witnesses a group of the local lovelies whisked away by a strange flying saucer. For some reason on Normy can save them and this is why the game goes by the subtitle of Beachbabe-a-Rama.

At this stage it's probably worth mentioning that the game has been done by the same guys responsible for the highly successful ToeJam & Earl. There are certainly similarities in some respects even though the games are very different. For example the characters in each are extremely outlandish while the backgrounds smack of the previous games.

▲ Some puzzles need a bit of thinking and indeed luck to solve.

TIP
If you see an egg on screen crouch down and bash it with your weapon in order to crack it open.

Normy is extremely simple to control with each of the three buttons activating a separate function. Pressing A sends our hero into a dash in true cartoon fashion with his legs spinning around wildly. A Dashmeter can be found in the lower left hand corner of the screen and this indicates how much more speed Normy has left. When the dial shows red Normy can just walk but if everything is all white then a good 100m sprint can be achieved!

The B button is nice and simple. It makes Normy jump. Nothing unusual about this feature. Jumping's jumping really isn't it?

The C button operates whatever weaponry you have picked up along the way. To start off with you can pick up a small chicken hammer which will extend in true clown fashion when you tap the pad. Only one weapon can be carried at anytime so careful decisions have to be made before picking up a new one.

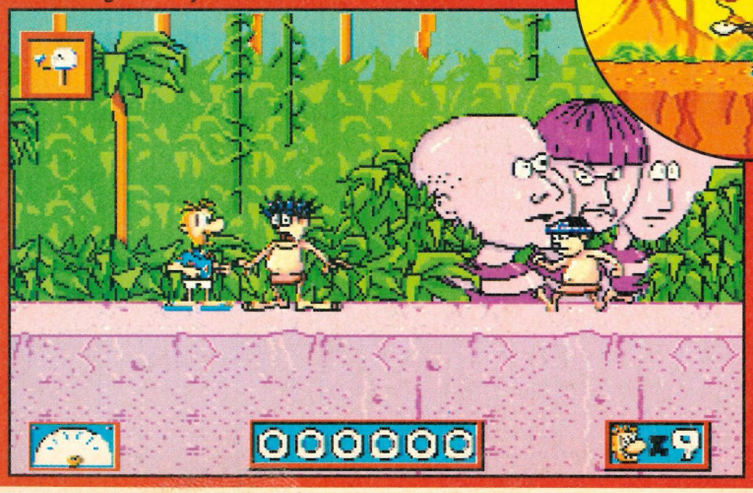
There are certain sections where, for one reason or another, it may not be immediately apparent what you have to do next. If you stick around for a couple of seconds then occasionally a thought bubble appears above Normy's head and may contain clues as to what to do.

This is quite a handy feature but it is also one that must be used with care as there are numerous bad guys waiting to sap your energy too!

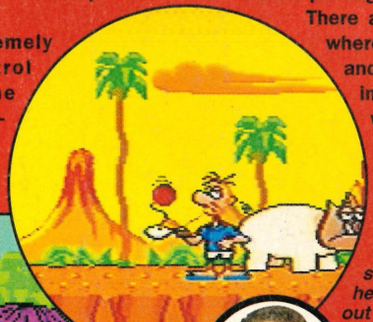
Normy is a strange game that, while being novel in many ways, will still not appeal to a lot of people. Platform games are ten-a-penny and this isn't really the best of the bunch. Having said that it also isn't the worst so it must have something going for it. This is one to play at a mate's house not one I'd go out and buy.

◀ Normy makes a Super Jump by pressing A and B together.

▲ The Politician level is one of the many varied levels in Normy.



▼ These statues look a bit like the Three Stooges don't you think.



◀ Leave Normy standing about and he'll get his bat and ball out for a while.

I wasn't overly keen to be truthful. Then again, I didn't like ToeJam and Earl either. There was a small period when I thought I was going to become addicted but this soon waned. In the long run I found Normy to be a bit repetitive and frustrating. It's better than average and there are worse platform titles about so it does have some things going for it but I'd rather play a myriad of other games ahead of this. Take a look by all means. I mean it might just be me who isn't that impressed by this but I doubt it. ■ **PAUL**

MEGA

SOUND

GRAPHICS

ADDICTIVENESS

PLAYABILITY

OVERALL 74%

■ Normy shouldn't be confused with either Norman Bates, a serial killer, or Norman Lamont, who wasn't (probably)

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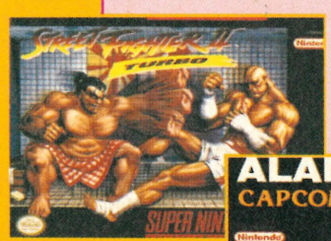

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OFFICIAL

PUBLISHER
Virgin
RELEASE DATE
March
PRICE
£44.99

PGA EURO

■ EA launch their latest in golfing sims. Now you can play a round against Europe's finest, all you need is a Mega Drive.

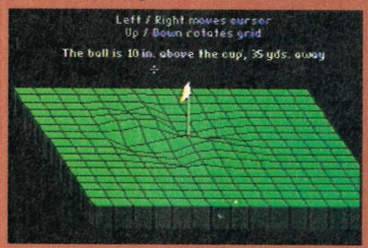
Golf. The very thought of participating or watching golf has always been treated with a negative attitude from me. Maybe I'm too cynical for my own good. Maybe I'm right in thinking this is a sport for anoraks. But after a few holes around the course, I'm influenced by its strategies and soothing properties.

It took my Dep. Ed. sometime before he was able to convince me to try it. Well, he broke my arm and gouged my eyes until I succumbed to his influential powers. After reading the extensive manual I have to admit, I was even more deterred from enjoying this game, no matter what.

TIP

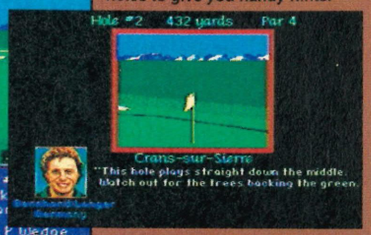
Take note of where the bunkers are in the overhead view. Avoiding them is trickier than you might think.

▼ *Pressing the A button will call up a detailed map of the putting area.*



▲ *Wind course recognised, the shot is played. And oh, it looks good. Damn I missed.*

▼ *Players crop up at the start of holes to give you handy hints.*



As the intro screen made its way to the monitor screen I was so bored I nearly chewed my own foot off for fun.

Then I corrected my attitude and set about my job with an open mind. After flicking through the menus at the top of the screen I was ready to begin my tournament.

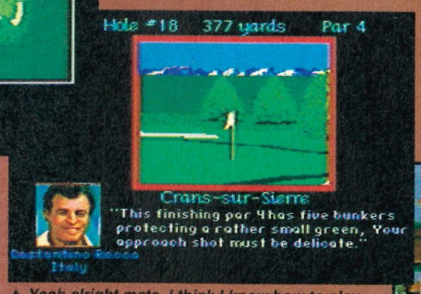
There were four courses to choose from. None of them I recognised, but then again I'm ignorant about the golfing world. As the intro music played I watched the screen for something interesting. What I saw was a camera-like shot zooming into the course I'd chosen to play. It wasn't fantastic by any means but it gave it a little depth and showed that there'd been a bit of thought put into the product.

After a quick look at the little pictures of the commentator informing viewers of the weather conditions and the state of play I was now completely ready to tee off for the first time. I grasped the club (or pad I should say) and began my swing and then whack! The ball flew down the fairway with power and precision. The wind made my ball swerve, as anticipated, but alas more so than I'd expected.

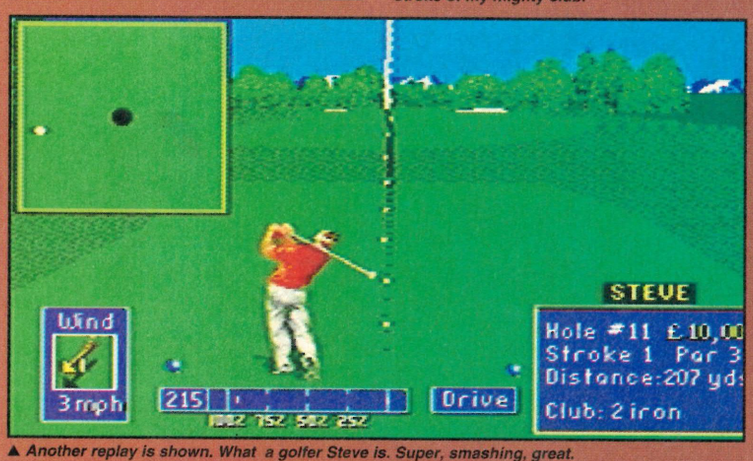
Hauling my caddy further up the course to see where ball was wasn't so much of a chore. It was much faster than the conventional walking method. Thank god for the miracle of computers. As I approached the found ball I was dismayed to learn I was in the rough. Tricky times lay ahead if I was to make this a perfect par. And so it continued until the ball reached its destination at the end of the fairway. I was both relieved and yet strangely frustrated. I should have made that ages ago!

This went on for the duration of all 18 holes. A very poor show, which lead me onto the road of

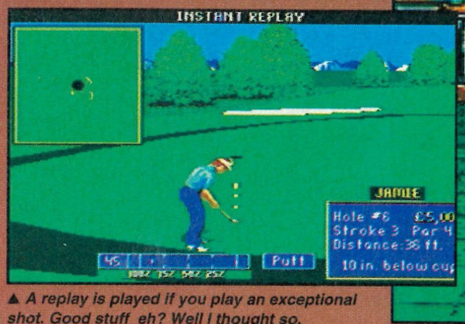
▲ *Aah. I think I can get this with a single stroke of my mighty club.*



▲ *Yeah alright mate. I think I know how to play golf now. So keep your opinions to yourself.*



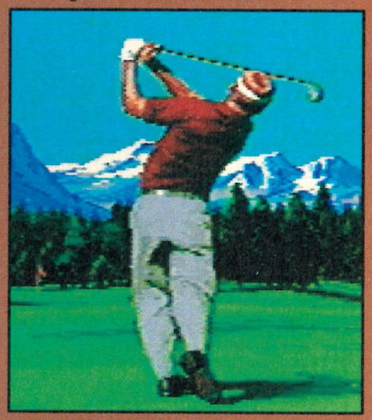
▲ *Another replay is shown. What a golfer Steve is. Super, smashing, great.*



▲ *A replay is played if you play an exceptional shot. Good stuff eh? Well I thought so.*

▲ *Now then, careful, watch that back swing or you could end up in the rough.*

▼ *What a fine action. I think he should do a coaching video for us all.*

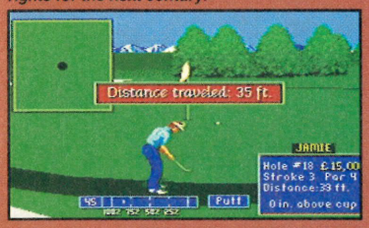


▼ *The Pro Shop provides the backdrop for the options screen.*

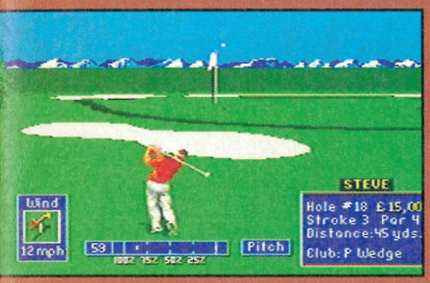
■ Mark Twain once wrote "Golf is a good walk spoiled". Miserable sod.

OPEAN TOUR

▼ Jamie Vs. Steve for $15000 and bragging rights for the next century.



▼ Playing skins games adds a little variation. Steve needs to get close to have a chance.



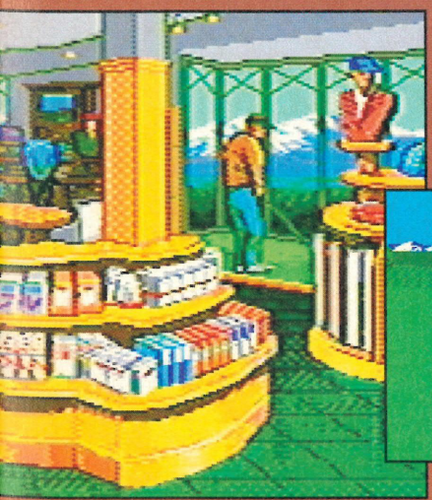
reaching perfection. I played this for quite some time until I realised I was becoming a fully fledged golfer and to make it worse, I was actually enjoying it!

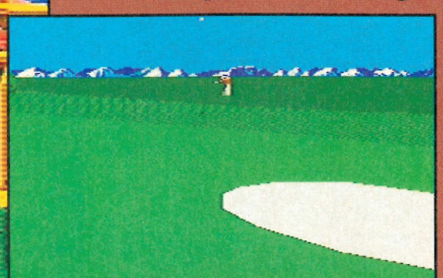
It's not like all the other games I've played. There wasn't anything to shoot or kick. It was just pure fun and relaxation. Even other sports sims don't compare to the actual competition involved in this tournament and the others that followed. It

Leading Money Winners

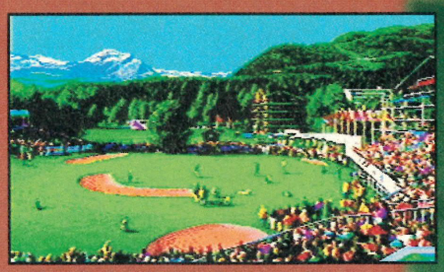
		Earnings	Won	Top 10	In Money
1	JAMIE	£110,000	0	0	0
2	STEVE	70,000	0	0	0
3	Ian LL	0	0	0	0
4	Dave	0	0	0	0
5	COLIN MOON a	0	0	0	0
6	TRAMPP	0	0	0	0
7	J. M. Olazabal	0	0	0	0
8	Rodger Davis	0	0	0	0
9	Costantino Rocca	0	0	0	0
10	Tony Johnstone	0	0	0	0
11	Mike McLean	0	0	0	0
12	B. Marchbank	0	0	0	0
13	Andrew Murray	0	0	0	0
14	Jamie Spence	0	0	0	0

▲ Jamie trounces Steve. Steve is the one who gets paid to play games for a living. Oh dear.





▲ Sometimes things don't quite work out. Steve needs a miracle to get this one close.



▲ Wow! The french course is perhaps the most visually impressive of the four.

seemed that I was playing more to my standards and pitting myself against myself. No one else seemed to matter as long as I got it right.

The game is brilliant in design. Okay golf sims have been out for ages and after I'd played the earlier titles I couldn't really see much difference between the gameplay other than a few different options but the courses are obviously different.

Which sums this game up really. It's great, with some slick graphics and a few crisp sound effects, like the crowd applauding or the ball being struck.

Controls in this game are simple. Pressing button B starts the power guage then press the B button again to try and hit optimum power. The bar now returns speedily to its starting positionand you must stop the bar exactly on the line to avoid the catastrophe of a bad slice or hook.

The other buttons call up the fade meter and the course maps. Clubs can also be chosen but it's best to stick with what the console recommends unless you fancy yourself as the next Nick Faldo.

The biggest enemy to golfers is without a doubt the weather, simulated perfectly here. If the wind is blowing across the course with some force then this will affect the ball's flight path. To combat this major problem practice is inevitable.

One thing that would have been nice, to really put the icing on the cake, would to have had some mellow music. Quite, calm melodies of different styles would have complemented this game so well, as long as they're optional of course. And, if it could have been possible, to have included a course editor.

To be able to create millions of new courses would have made this a collectors item. Mind you, it should be in your collection if you don't own any other PGA game. Just remember if you own a PGA title, well, at it's just extra courses really. Excuse me, Seve wants another game. Ho-hum, off we go again. Fore!

I won't be watching any golf in the future, and I certainly won't be enlisting myself into any golfing club. But the attraction to play PGA will always be there. You have it all from the joy of sinking a long putt to the nightmare of watching the wind carry your shot sweetly into a bunker. You can even have up to four players and save those players in its battery back-up. I must insist that everyone try it, just the once, to see what your Mega Drive is missing. ■ **DAVE**

MEGA

SOUND

GRAPHICS

ADDICTIVENESS

PLAYABILITY

OVERALL

89%

SILVER

OFFICIAL

PUBLISHER
Virgin
RELEASE DATE
March
PRICE
£44.99

LOST VIK

There is something about strapping horns to your head then pillaging the local village. Virgin have the answer why.

It's all about team work, ask any England manager and he'll tell you without collective thinking you've got nothing. Well, Lost Vikings is about such unity. The three characters that you control really must act as one if you're to even get beyond the first couple of levels. Not that that should put you off. I must admit here to being slightly dischuffed about getting one of these strategy games thrown at me to review. I didn't think I liked them. Until now.

Taking control of three Vikings lost in time you must conquer increasingly difficult levels in an attempt to get them through the correct time portal and back to their loved ones. To achieve maximum success make sure you keep the abilities of each character in mind when using them.

Nearly all the levels require a little bit of thought and in no time at all

▼ *Just when you think you've saved them all along comes another land to explore.*

VICTORY OR VALHALLA

1. Advice can be found on the earlier levels in the form of exclamation boxes which can be activated by pressing C with any character. The boxes are sequential and can usually be found near a difficult obstacle.

2. Doors such as these can be opened easily by simply rushing through. In later levels you may find them locked so searching for a key is the order of the day. Some doors can only be opened by sending Erik the Swift flying headlong into them and gleefully watching them collapse in a heap. Watch out for any enemies or traps that are revealed.

3. Force fields are nearly always fatal and the only way of shutting them down is to activate the on/off switches. This is done either by placing a character next to them and pressing C or simply using Baleog's bow to shoot an arrow at remote sites.

4. Aliens are constantly roaming the landscape and some are friendly while some are not. The friendly ones can be spoken to by selecting the C button and can give valuable advice.

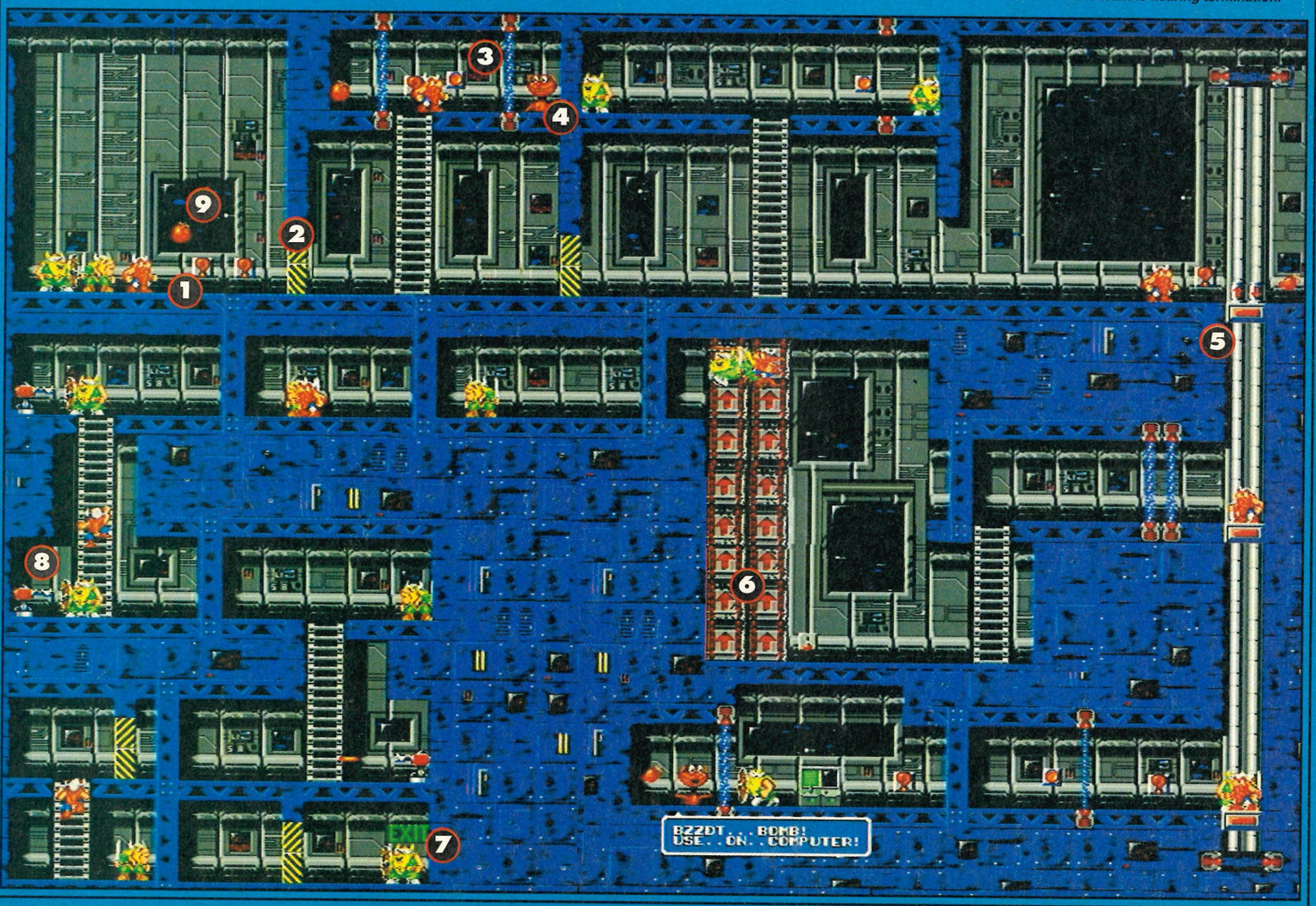
5. Lifts allow all the characters, (at once or individually) to gain access to the levels within the scene. To travel on one simply stand upright and press UP or DOWN. Simple!

6. Airlifts work both for and against you. Once activated, (here by the red button) the characters can travel upwards in a draft of air. In later levels you must control the height of the character as there are some deadly traps in the ceiling.

7. The exits are hidden well out of sight and normally require the entire level to be explored before reaching them. All the characters must assemble at the exit before the following level can be reached. Failure in this will mean attempting it all again!

8. Gun turrets mean danger for all players. They can sap energy very fast so it's advisable to set up a shield. In most cases Olaf the Stout's proves more than adequate for the job and can stand there quite content while other members of the team pass by safely.

9. Food can be collected then used to replenish valuable health points. It can also be transferred to nearby characters by pressing the 'mode' button on the joypad, highlighting the item, moving it then activating it by pressing the X button. Food is worth on average one hit point so it's advisable to send Erik The Swift off on little expeditions when a member of the team is nearing termination.

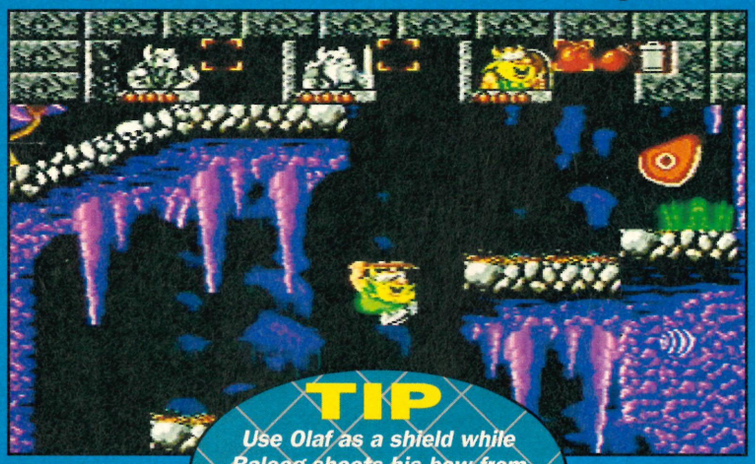


■ On the Shetland Isles every last tuesday in January people celebrate Up-Helly-Ea. This involves re-enacting the burial of a Viking Chief.

INGS

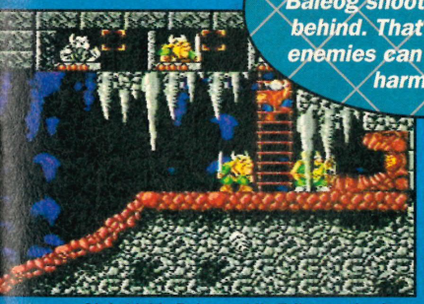
you will be plotting and exploring what the game has to offer. Power ups can be obtained by all the characters and help by destroying enemies or adding speed or hit points to your inventory.

There are thirty seven levels of play with sections themed on certain lands, ie Prehistoric or Egypt zones. Like many platform/puzzle games the progression is passworded so you can take your time getting all the way through. There are some really interesting missions to accomplish along your way which can all be unraveled after a little thought, or a bit of help from other characters in the game.



TIP

Use Olaf as a shield while Baleog shoots his bow from behind. That way nearly all enemies can be kept out of harms way.



▲ Olaf shields Baleog while Erik smartly nips up the ladder. It's all teamwork!

▲ All manner of traps and devices have been laid in your path to slow you down.

▲ The far off land of Egypt provides scorpions and mad Pharoahs. Help.

▲ There is constant banter between the characters.

▲ Take your time with any enemies that might stand between you and a much needed item.

THREE NORSEMEN

Baleog: The warrior of the three and a valuable asset to the team. He has two weapons – The sword allows close-range combat especially handy for dinosaurs, scorpions, snails and the odd alien being while the bow and arrow allows long-range killing. The latter can also spring traps from a safe distance.

Erik The Swift: The red-bearded one can dash around pretty quickly. Use him to gain access to hidden areas and reach high platforms as his amazing jumping ability allows some serious acrobatics. He can also crumble walls by running at them and pressing A. Getting it wrong means losing valuable hit points.

Olaf the Stout: At first sight slow and cumbersome but a vital member of the team. His shield, once raised, provides valuable defence by blocking monsters while the other characters pass by unharmed. Olaf can also raise his shield above his head and float down deep ravines like someone on a hang glider.

NORDIC JOY

MEGA

SOUND

GRAPHICS

ADDICTIVENESS

PLAYABILITY

OVERALL 89%

I seem to be quite a fan of Virgin games, Dune II really caught my attention and this one is doing the same. The puzzles are challenging and you soon develop systems for conquering the challenges thrown at you. With nearly forty levels to get through you certainly won't get tired of this game, despite each one being based on the same theme. The characters are all individual and the little comments they make just add to the atmosphere. Nice one Virgin. ■ **STEVE**

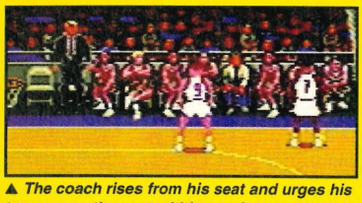
SILVER

OFFICIAL

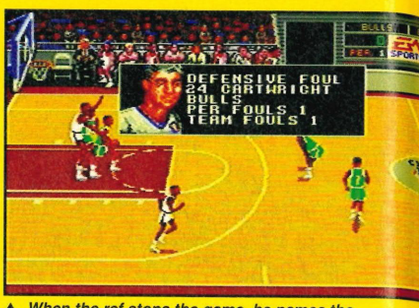
PUBLISHER
EA Sports
RELEASE DATE
March
PRICE
£44.99

NBA SHO

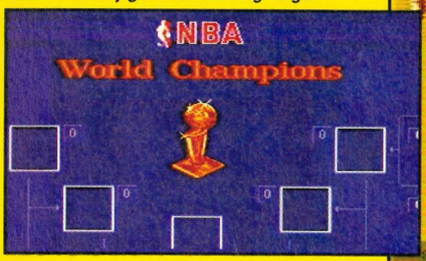
Hoop-shooting basketball mania is upon us as yet another US sports game bounces over the Atlantic and onto my desk.



▲ The coach rises from his seat and urges his team on as they get within scoring range.



▲ When the ref stops the game, he names the player responsible for causing the foul.



It seems like the whole world has gone basketball mad. Everyone within the industry involved in programming sports sims has cashed in on the basketball mania. Well, now it's the turn of EA Sports to attempt to break out on the court and chalk up the highest score. If you look at some of the previous releases from EA Sports you'll notice their winning formula. Fifa Soccer is a prime example. The smoothness of the scrolling combined with the fast paced action all blend in to make for a pretty great looking game.

The programmers also follow the sport exactly, including every aspect of the plays, fouls and of course, the multi–player facility. NBA Showdown is fully compatible with the EA four-way adaptor.

▲ Check the team ratings for the this season and then compare the two teams selected.

To re–establish the fact that EA Sports do hold the key to a quality sim, they've released NBA Showdown 94. Can they corner the basketball market? Now, the competition is pretty tough at the moment with so many basketball games out.

When starting the game there are several options for you to set before commencing play. First select the type of game you wish to participate in. You can set up a new season, compete in the play–offs or just let the computer set the controls up for the match.

You can also scan through the calendar-style screens which show the schedule of fixtures for your chosen team. With the usual EA extra battery back-up facility available it's worth getting stuck into a full blown Tournament and going for the NBA title trophy.

Right, that's everything sorted, lets move over to the studio to get the full run down on the chosen teams. If you watch the full commentary, you'll be all clued up on your team and your opponents. The five team members have their mug shots flashed up on screens behind our All-American announcer while he names them and their coaches.

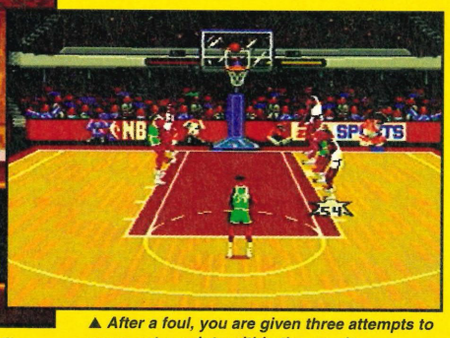
Once play starts you must stay alert at all times as some of the opposing teams can run rings round you while you sit there wondering which player to change to. Whatever you do, don't lose your cool.

All the rules are closely followed so watch those elbows. Any defensive fouls or offensive charging will be dealt with severely. You automatically lose possession no matter where you are on the court, and any serious foul results in free penalty shots for your opponent. When playing on the computer selected game, the CPU may call a time out after several fouls, in an effort to try and get you to substitute that offending player. But if you reckon that the CPU is giving you a raw deal, stick your four way adaptor in to the port and teach it a lesson when your mates get round.

TIP

When you attempt a shot at basket, hang around and stay close just in case you get a rebound. If you do, it's another shot time.

▲ No, this isn't Ron Barr. It seems basketball gets a completely different commentating team.

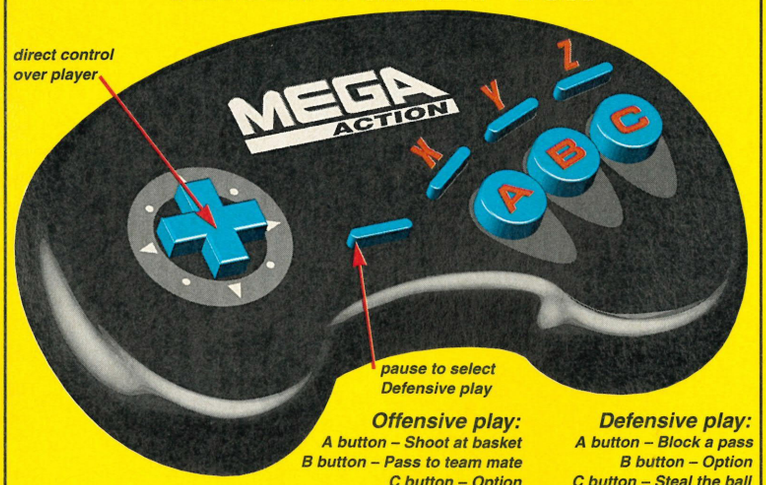


▲ After a foul, you are given three attempts to score extra points within the penalty area.

■ Basketball is a game of two halves, though strangely enough four quarters as well!

WDOWN 94

FINGER DUNKIN' FUN



Offensive play:
A button – Shoot at basket
B button – Pass to team mate
C button – Option

Defensive play:
A button – Block a pass
B button – Option
C button – Steal the ball

With four other team members on court the action rarely slows down. They work as a team by moving up and down the court when required and they also block to their best ability. To move them exactly to the right position, for example to get a better shot at basket, just switch players and move them in.

Your team members also latch on to any unmarked players to narrow down the chances of your opponent getting a successful pass off. By pausing the game and selecting the coaching option you can change the positions of your team. If one guy keeps slipping past your defense, then you can modify the players' positions and have someone else marking him.

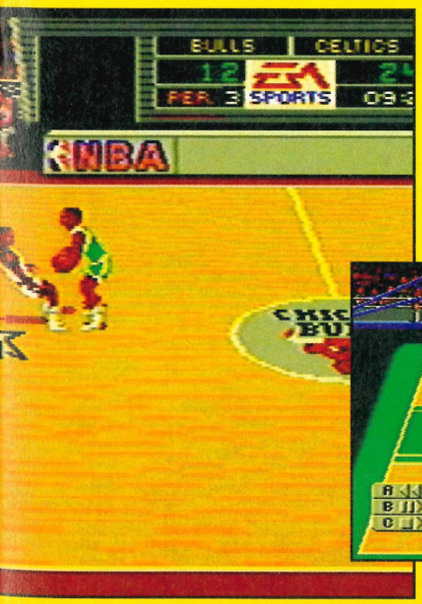
Even though the action runs very fast from one end of the court to the other, there's more to do than just running about and shooting. With five members to your team, each one can play a different role. Strategy is the name of the game. Utilise all team members, whether they are to act as decoys or dart about trying to make some space ready to receive the ball.

Each of the 27 league teams play a different game. Some hold back in the defensive zone waiting for a good break, while others prefer all out attack. Watch each of the teams in the computer demo first then you'll be able to play a better game against them.

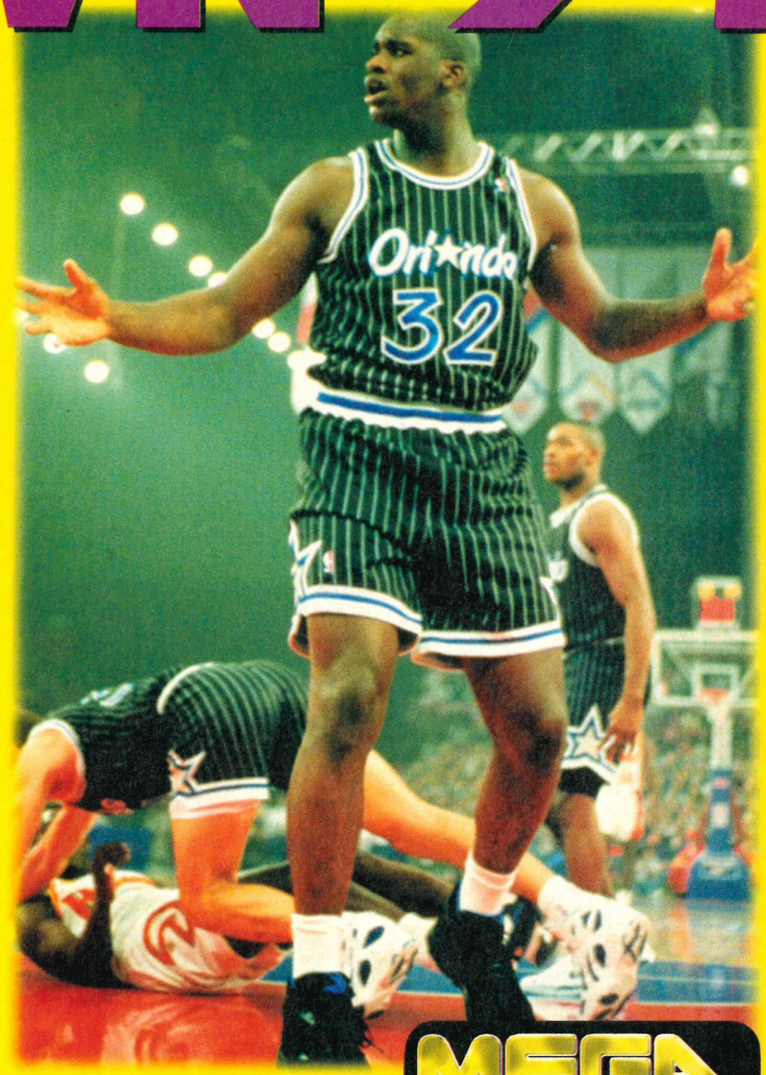
Once you start to recognise certain moves by certain characters, you'll be able to assess how to play the next period of the match. To even out the odds for any new comers, during the selection of the teams, go to the All Star selection.

This allows you to pick and choose from all the players within the NBA. Choose the finest players and perfect their moves and abilities to create the team which most coaches could only dream of.

▼ *The foul will go against the attacking team here for charging at the defensive line-up.*



▲ *It's all down to who can gain the most air off the court. So really slam that jump button!*



All in all, it looks and plays great and will take some beating. Still, even EA have plans to put another basketball title out in the near future involving one Shaquille O'Neal.

At present they are still bidding for the licence to use his name. Sounds fairly promising, but we'll have to wait and see. So as another all American sport invades the consoles, all we can do is take a seat court side and watch the Showdown.

Showdown 94 represents a quality sports sim which covers every aspect of professional basketball. All of the rules are closely followed on the cart. If you've seen the standard of previous releases of EA Sports games and liked what you've seen, then you'll love this one. But if you fancy a different style of basketball game have a look at some of our other reviews in this issue. I think this is the closest simulation to Pro hoop-shooting you'll get. What next? Can we expect to see a quick transformation onto the CD format in the future? ■ **GLEN**

MEGA

SOUND

GRAPHICS

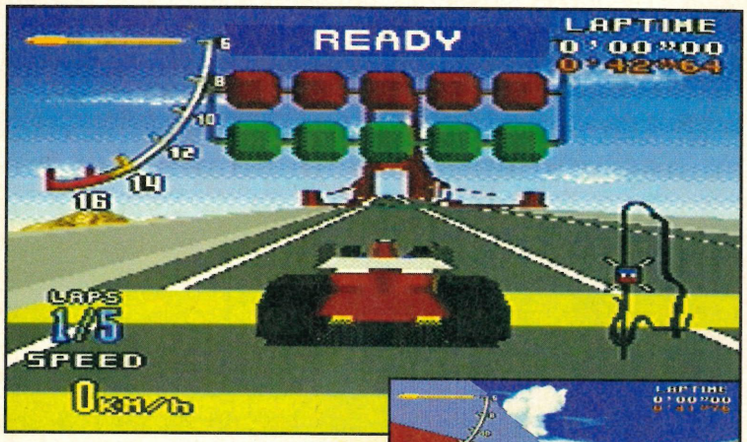
ADDICTIVENESS

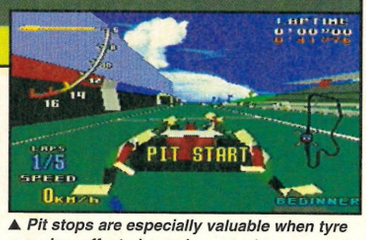
PLAYABILITY

OVERALL 84%

VIRTUA RACING

SVP or Sega Virtua Processor may not mean much to you but when you sit down in front of Virtua Racing it'll mean plenty.

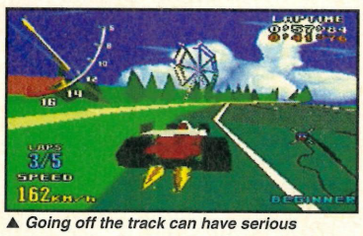




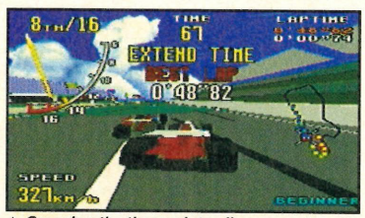
▲ *Pit stops are especially valuable when tyre wear has effected your lap speeds.*

Mega Action first looked at Virtua Racing way back in issue two and it seemed the game was due for certain release. Things being what they are, however, the game was withdrawn from the schedule, compacted down from the proposed 32 meg and tweaked here and there thanks to the various focus groups it had been subjected to.

Starfox, or should I say Starwing, was Nintendo's attempt at the polygon 'virtual' world and by all accounts it was quite good. Not brilliant mind, and certainly not worth the £100 price tag it got on import. Nintendo tried desperately to keep the price down but the FX chip required to move these kind of shapes on screen dictated big bucks. The SVP is Sega's answer to the problem of polygon manipulation and as we will testify, it's very very powerful indeed. The game runs with no slowdown, no matter how busy the screen gets, and with an entire grand prix going on around you that is quite a feat.



▲ *Going off the track can have serious consequences in more experienced levels.*



▲ *Crossing the time points allows you to continue in the race so keep it up!*

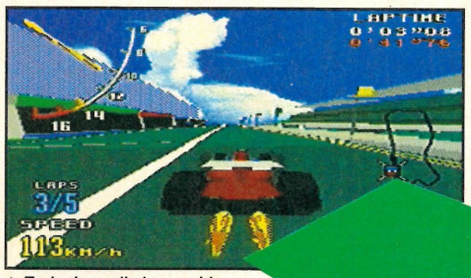
There are three courses to choose from, they have no names as such, just the labels of Beginner, Medium and Expert. A choice of automatic or manual gearbox is available for each.

To change gear on the console version you simply shift with the D-Pad, moving up and down for respective gears. Automatic is not as fast, an apparent trend in all racing games but don't let that put you off. With some hard practice you should be able to comfortably cross the line in a good position.

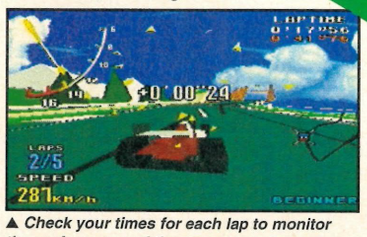
Of course, what makes the arcade version so great are the views which you can change between while racing. The console version is no different with all three angles retained. Now we were expecting some serious slow-down whenever the views were activated but nothing seemed to glitch at all. Oh well, we tried.

You can drive from inside the cockpit with only the drivers hands visible and the track at a very threatening level or you can select slightly behind, (or chase as it is known with flight simulators) and then there's the skycam, a view from a couple of hundred feet above.

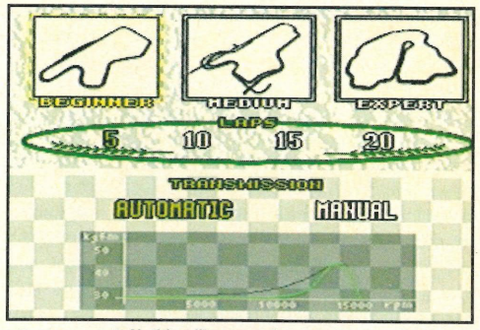
Each has its attributes but the best seems to be the chase view, the most popular in the arcades, allowing the driver both to see ahead for corners and react in time to other cars. The cockpit view is a test of reactions with little time for smooth driving and more time to weave about uncontrollably. The skycam is handy on free runs for learning track shapes but the view just doesn't allow much for much accuracy during a race.



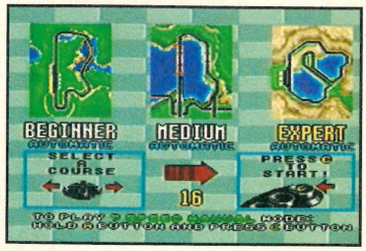
▲ *Turbo is applied on rapid acceleration, here we go!*



▲ *Check your times for each lap to monitor the performance of the car set up.*

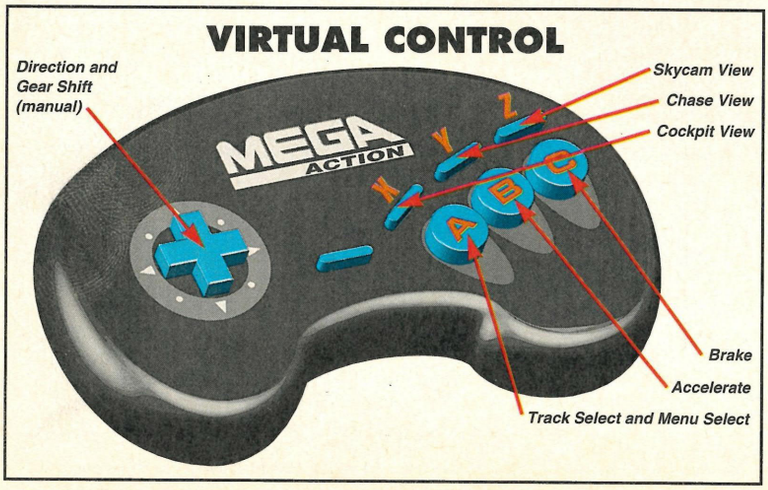


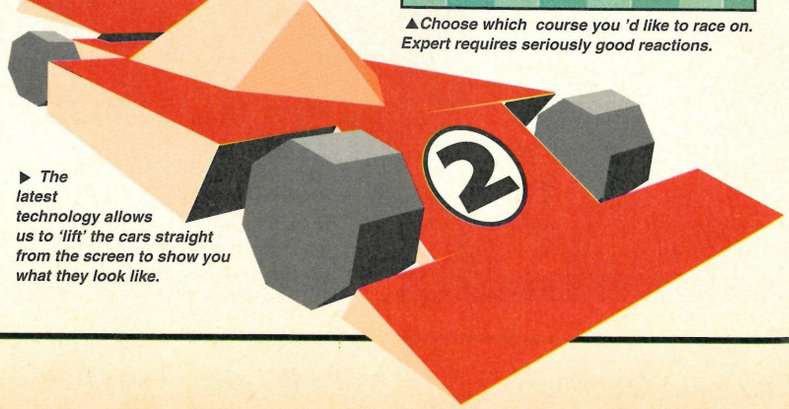
▲ *Nothing like a graph to confuse you before racing. This one shows gearbox performance.*



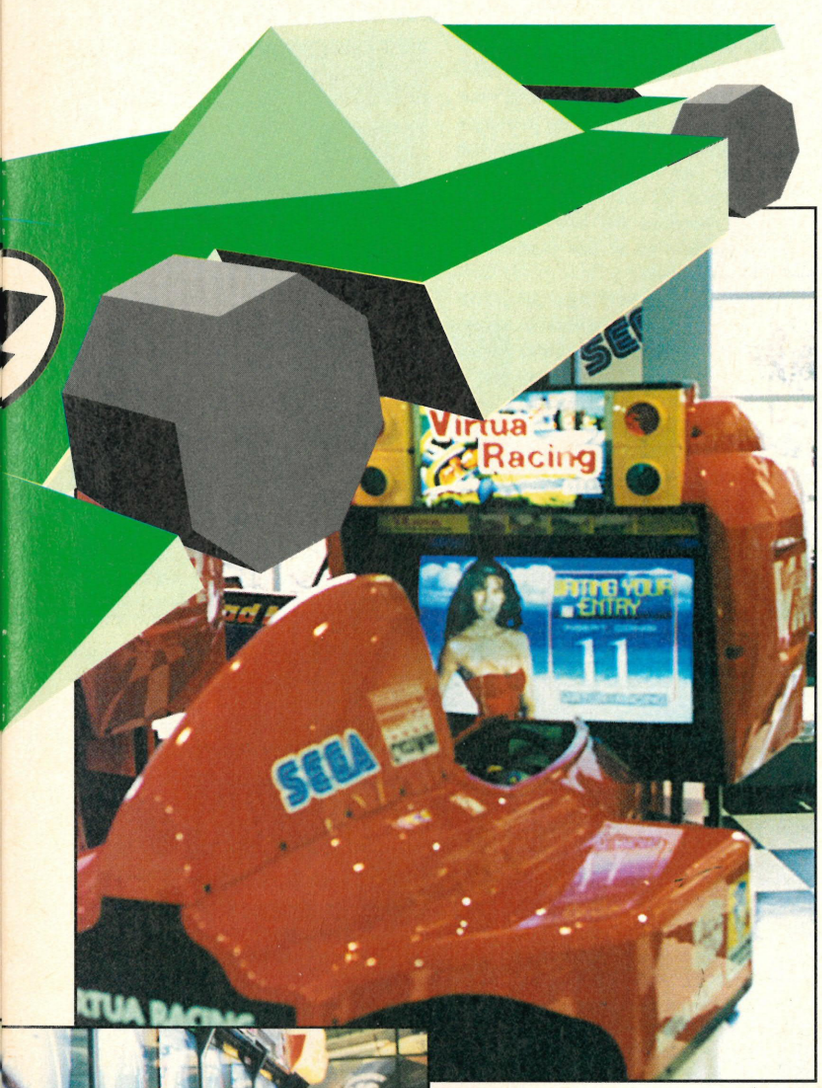
▲ *Choose which course you 'd like to race on. Expert requires seriously good reactions.*

VIRTUAL CONTROL





▶ *The latest technology allows us to 'lift' the cars straight from the screen to show you what they look like.*



▲ *Up to eight of you can play the arcade version of Virtua Racing at one time.*

▲ *Higher views allow you to see more track but the car is less acurate to control.*

FIGHTING AGAINST THE FX

SVP stands for Sega Virtua Processor and a variant of this is present in the arcade version of Virtua Racing and more recently the much talked about Virtua Fighting. This is a totally custom chip and has taken Toshiba many years to develop.

Having a custom chip just to handle the polygon manipulation is nothing new, Nintendo have had their FX chip for over a year now though cost has stopped proper development. Sega are currently toying with the problem of how to market the chip.

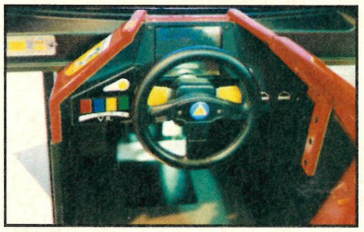
Rumour has it there are two strategies. First is to simply incorporate the chip into each and every board and just ride the price increase. Nintendo's problems have been noted though, so it seems likely they'll use a plug-through, a bit like the adapters or cheating devices.

This would eliminate the cost each and every time and replace gamers with the option of a one-off expense. Sounds more sense to us, especially if Sega do one of their special launch package deals.

▲ *Virtua Fighting is the next generation of polygon games from Sega.*

▲ *There are two versions of the original Virtua Racing. Here we see the most popular being driven by a rather uncomfortable member of Mega Action. He's in last place.*

SITTING PRETTY – ARCADE STYLE



▲ *The coloured buttons on the left of the wheel are for adjusting track view.*

The arcade machine first saw the light of day in this country about a year ago in two versions. There was the stand up unit which had a large screen, accelerator, brake and a steering wheel that shuddered on impact with anything either on or off the track.

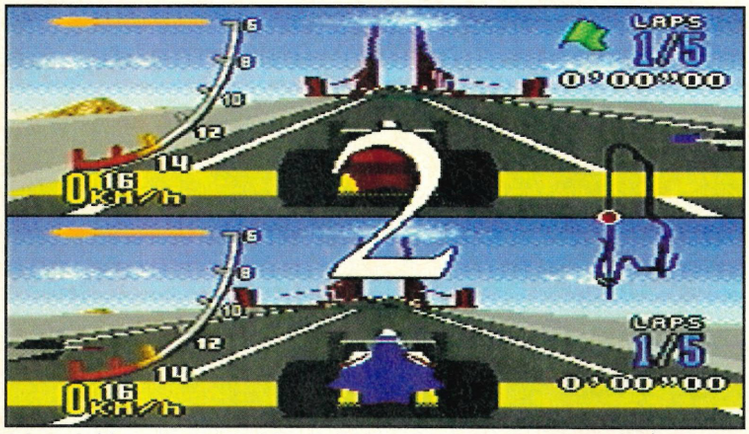
The second version is probably the most famous, a cut out full-size cockpit of a shiny red formula one car with hydraulic seats and a pressure sensitive steering wheel. You sat in the unit, adjusted the seat with two buttons then hit the accelerator and you were off.

What made this machine stand out was that any number of players could be linked up to play one large, hectic grand prix. First corners tended to be near total mayhem as furious friends yelled at each other to move out of the way.

The three track system, each more difficult than the next, plus a choice of automatic or seven gears originated here. Shifting of gears was done by simply manipulating the gear levers aside the steering column, rather like the real semi-automatic gearboxes on the F-1 circuit today.

▲ *This particular version of the arcade machine has eight linked up and two master screens so onlookers can see the action. You can try this machine out at Sega World, Colindale.*

TWO PLAYER OPTION



▲ *Instead of the much rumoured link-up facility the researchers at Sega settled on a spliy screen option. What you have now is without doubt the ultimate racing game on the Mega Drive.*

The two player option is Sega's answer to the multi-link option successful in the arcades. A split-screen perspective gives individual views of the race with each player able to toggle between the three racing views.

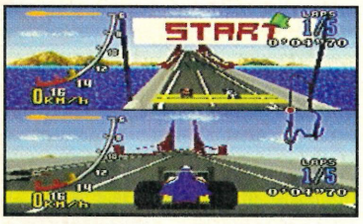
Again no slow-down occurs even if you switch between views as fast as possible. The chip, it would appear, is capable of just about anything and further developments in the polygon field are certainly worth waiting for.

There is nothing more you can say about the option really except that it is now the best racing game ever to come out of the Mega Drive. The speed, the view options, the tracks and the car set up mean that this game has captured the original and something more. We soon found ourselves yelling at each other to get out the way.

The game was first rumoured to be having a link option with a cable simply linking the carts together like some of the Neo Geo games.

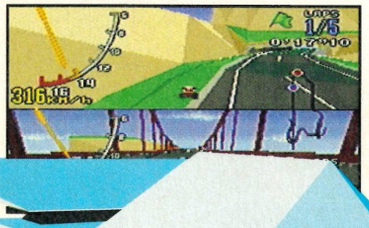
The idea was eventually rejected mainly because the price of the cart had not yet been fixed and the threat of it being slightly more expensive might have put some people off. Things seem to have turned out alright though, as the screenshots can surely testify.

▼ *Each player can adjust his view independently of the other.*

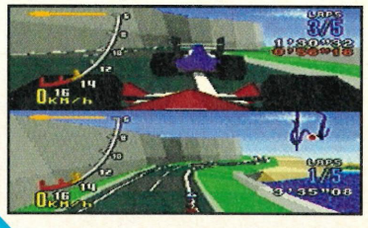


▼ *Player one in the red car is clearly streets ahead of the inexperienced blue car.*

▼ *Taking to the skycam view it looks like player one has skidded off.*

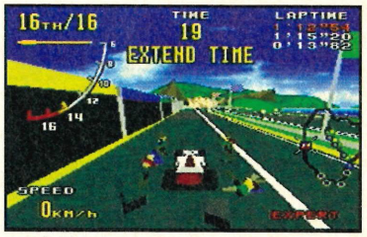


▼ *Slip streaming the opposition is the best way to scream past at the right moment.*



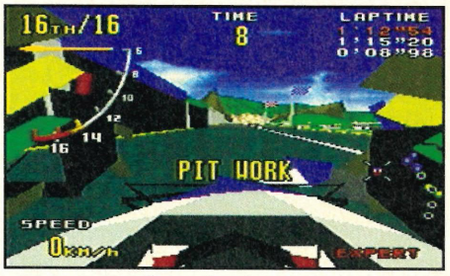
A VIRTUAL STANDSTILL

The pit team are your lifeline to winning the race. They service and maintain the car during the gruelling race or Grand-Prix. Should you damage the car, spin-off badly or run over the grass the car will become slightly less efficient. By pulling into the pits your car receives the best possible care and attention at the expense of but a few seconds.



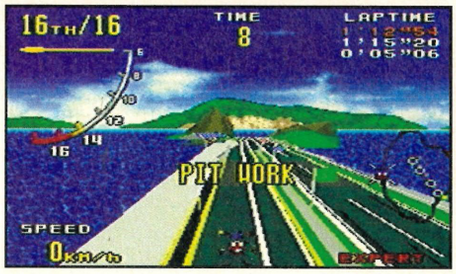
▲ *As the car comes to a stop the pit crew get to work repairing the damage.*

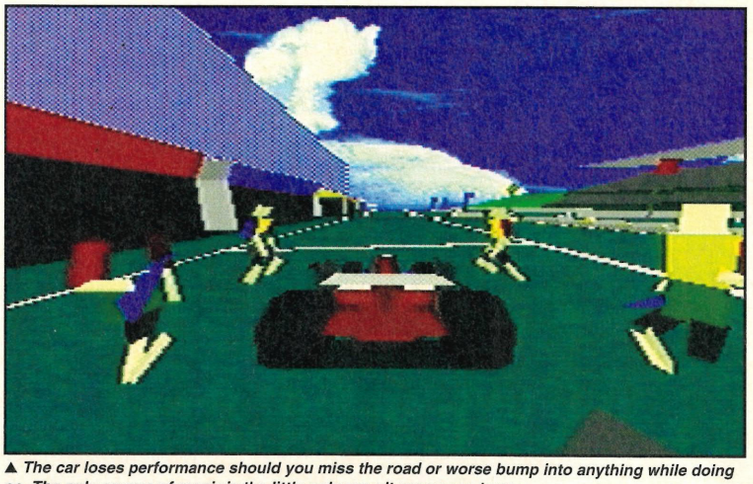
The difficulty settings play the vital part in pit management with the expert level needing the most care. Should you come into contact with anything then your front or rear wings become damaged and even start to hang off a bit. Pulling into the pits allows the team to replace damaged parts and gives you a new set of tyres into the bargain. Of course the time it takes may become vital in the closing sections of the race so careful driving always pays off. It's here in the pits that the race can be won or lost if you have sustained damage or the car isn't quite performing properly then you must time your arrival with care. The average pit stop can take anything up to fifteen seconds so coming in too early will allow the other players or cars to gain a lead you may never take back. In two player mode with both of you entering the pits it can be quite fun!



▲ *If you select the cockpit view you get a great chance to see your team at work.*

▼ *Somewhere down there some serious work is going on with what's left of the car.*





▲ *The car loses performance should you miss the road or worse bump into anything while doing so. The only source of repair is the little polygon pit crew seen here.*

MEGA VIEW

This will blow your mind. Not only is the game very very fast but also the detail has hardly been lost from the arcade version. The two player option has made the final version too with no slow down or glitches while making view adjustments. With three tracks to choose from and seven-geared or automatic gearboxes this game will be a best seller for years, not months. ■ ***STEVE***

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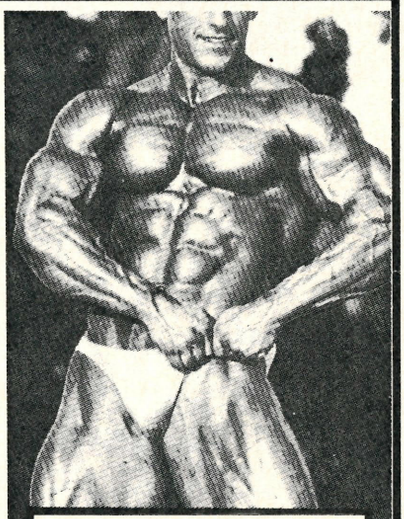

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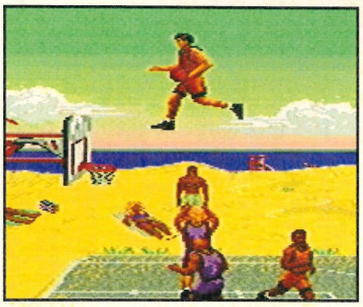
BARKLEY: SHUT

Steetfighting with balls. Accolade provide an asphalt alternative to the squeaky clean image of the NBA.

Once a basketball star obtains a certain level of esteem there seems to be nothing he can do wrong. Sponsors flock to his side and anything touched or endorsed seems to possess that mark of success.

Accolade have taken the endorsement process further by offering a game that not only bears the mark of this Stateside superhero but also stands for what the whole player is about. What we have effectively is the roots of this American obsession, another slant on the game of basketball and a real challenge for anything up to four players.

Lets look at the market. It seems basketball is very much in vogue at the moment with four games currently in the process of being launched in this country over the next couple of months. As far as the British gaming public are concerned basketball is basketball. Hardly a way of life, just another American import attracting attention only in certain quarters.



▲ *Grab some serious air and pull off a dunk that only a pro can respect.*

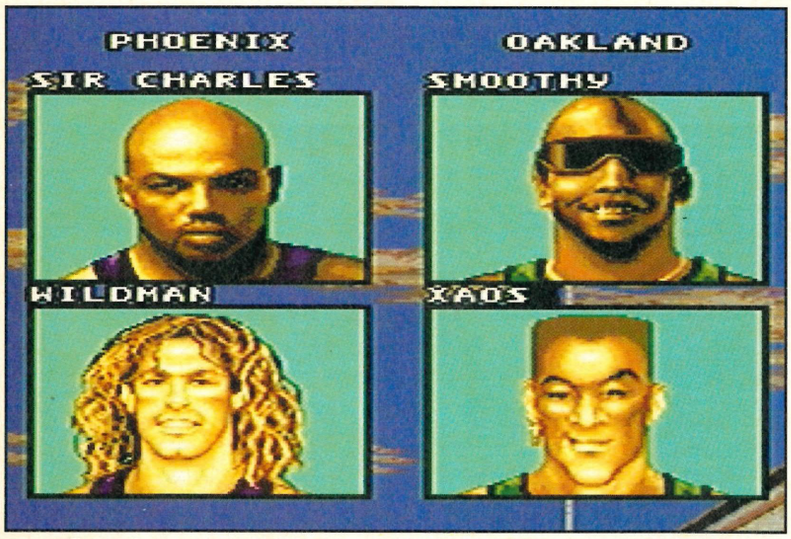
▼ *Here are the players you can choose from. Mean and ready for some top class action.*

To smash this down the console concept of the game must provide more than the usual endless statistics and constant player/ team management. It needs instant access to the action and that certain edge.

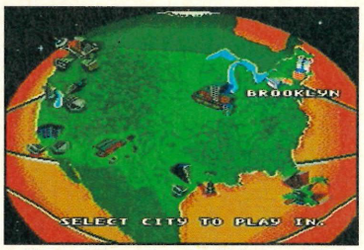
Sir Charles and Accolade have that edge. This game gives end to end action plus just enough statistics to provide decision making possibilities. Yet there's more. Charles Barkley is more than just a face on a court, he stands for something. This is reflected in the game, not only in the title but also in the 'rules' and feel of play.

Some basketball players come through college and achieve status through trial and perseverance, study of tactics and an adhesion to certain principles. Sir Charles took a different route. His streetcorner training and love of a different game, the game of streetbasketball.

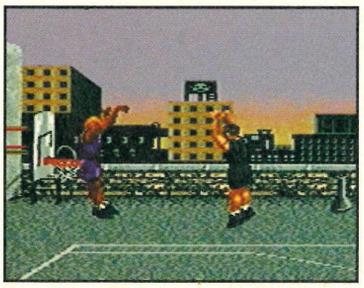
It was this that took him into the pros. This game is rough, tough and a law onto itself. Rivalry is high, almost to the status of gangland



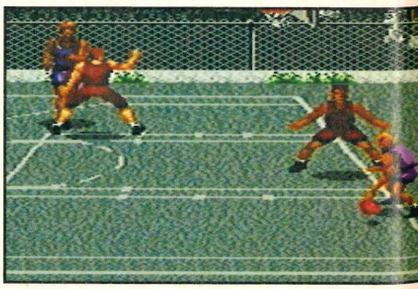
▲ *The preview screen shows the match up you have selected. These guys are rad and bad.*



▲ *The world is your oyster. Well the world of street basketball that is.*



▲ *It's very much a case of end to end stuff with good timing required to block shots.*



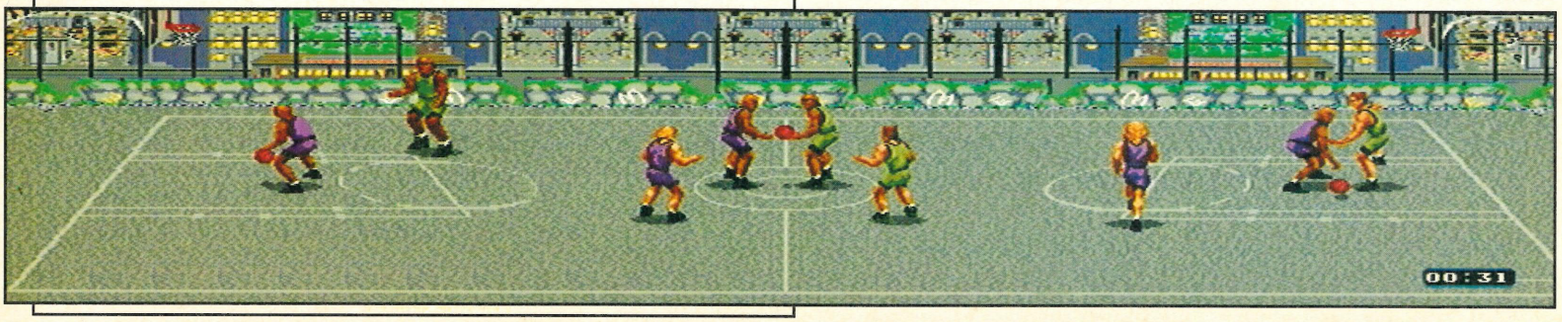
▲ *Block potential danger then time your steal if you want to earn some needed points.*

BASE-LINE KICKIN'

There are eight courts and locations around the States to play on, from the stadium at Houston to the beach in Miami. The courts are basically the same, however, there's little scope for the delicate footwork that most NBA games provide.

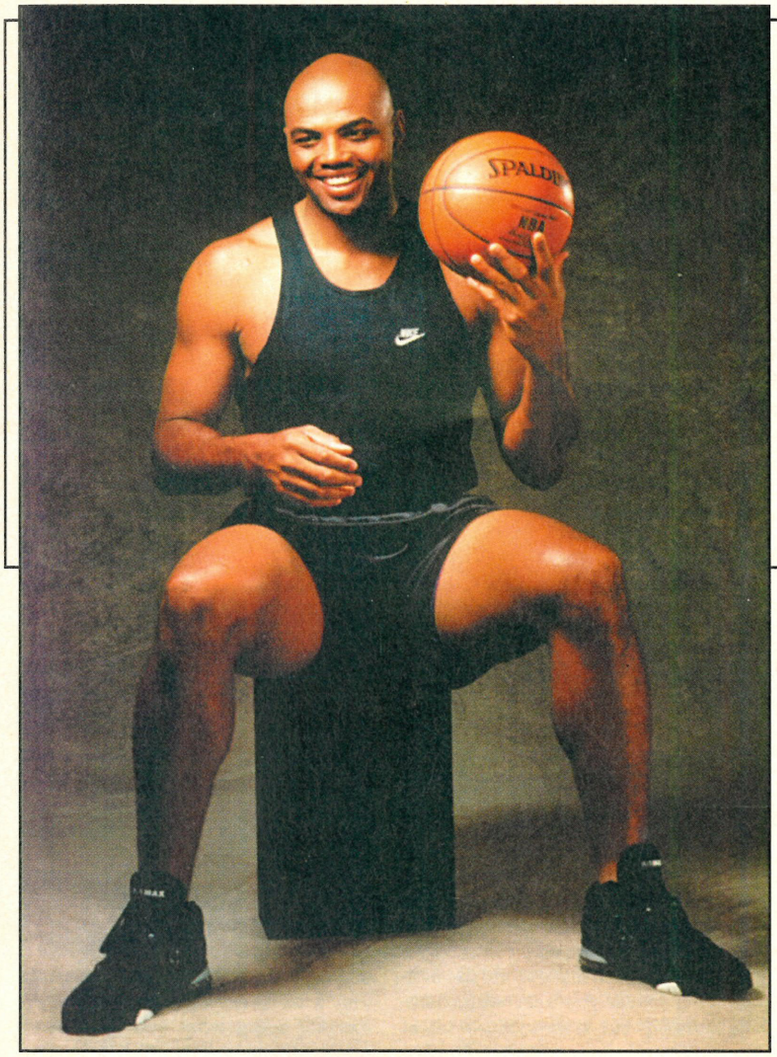
Barging your way around court is the order of the day and certain 'hotspots' allow for the turbos to be used effectively. Player and game speed mean the court proves an adequate area for this intense competition and quick scoring games seem likely.

Shut Up And jam certainly isn't a game for those with slow reactions. The stadium setting in Houston is for the tournament finals and provides a more than adequate venue for team exhibition. Mind you all the backdrops are pretty decent.



UP AND JAM!

▼ *You can use any means you like to gain the advantage. This is streetbasketball at its best and most furious.*



LORD AND MASTER

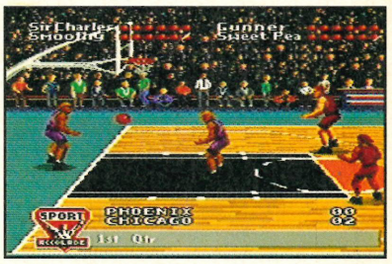
It has been a rocky ascent for Sir Charles with eight merely excellent seasons among the journeymen of Philidelphia before finding Superstar form after being traded to the Phoenix Suns in 1992.

At 6'5" Barkley is small for his position – "power forward"– but makes up for it through power and sheer athletic ability. He may be 'small' but still managed to dunk over 7'1" and 300 lbs Denver Nuggets centre Dikembe Mutombo during the 1991 All-Star game.

His trade to the Suns and the 1992 Olympics provided the spotlight he had so desperately needed. Consistently brilliant performances making him the huge mega star he is today.

Further seasons with Phoenix saw a domination of the NBA and the leagues MVP award quickly followed. Now the most famous active basketball player around his charisma and character have seen a constant source of sponsorship come from Corporate America. He's also inspired countless Americans.

▲ *The stadium provides a choice backdrop to the unofficial national final.*



▲ *Time to play ball. There aren't many rules so do pretty much what you like.*

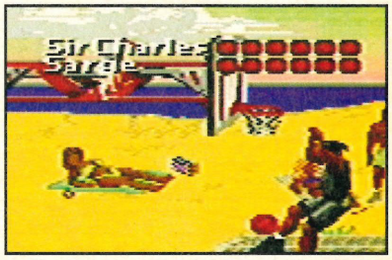
ethics. You play for money and you play to win.

Barkley Shut Up and Jam is two on two. The control configurations allows for one or two players to challenge in a tournament, series or exhibition with the computer controlling the guy without the ball.

Intelligence of players is high, so there's no problems with waiting for the computer to get the character in a suitable position to dunk. If four of you want to play well, then that's has been catered for. Both the EA and Sega four way taps can be used.

There are sixteen players to select from when assembling your team and each has individual characteristics based on an overall average. Of course one player stands out from the rest but Sir Charles can only be selected by one player! Fight over it.

Each player has six turbo boosts for both defence and attack which are replenished after each quarter. These effectively provide the player with 'special moves' meaning some exceptional exhibitions can be pulled off. In attack some spectacular aerobatic hoops can be scored and in defence you can do some unusual blocks. Save them up for as long as possible for effective gameplay.



▲ *Miami is just one location for a whole series of grudge matches. No time for scenery now.*

WHITE KNUCKLE EXPRESS

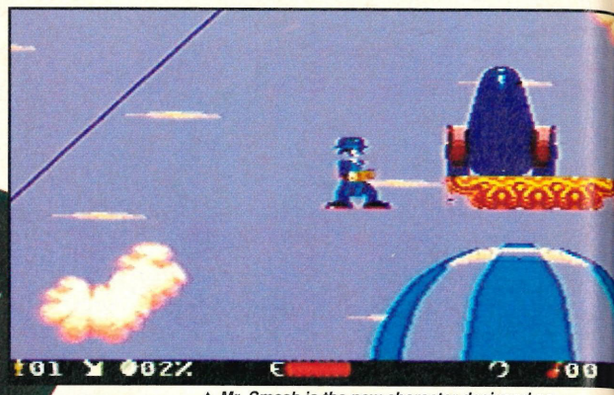
MEGA VIEW

The style of play and general streetwise feel of the game make it difficult to compare with NBA Jam which, at first glance, seems the obvious rival. Both games are great in their own right though I cannot help but favour the Accolade product with their attention to detail and, more importantly, Basketball legend backing. The obvious input that Barkley has made reflects on a game that on playing makes basketball a more exciting product for a UK and European audience. ■ *STEVE*

RELEASE: APRIL PRICE: £39.99

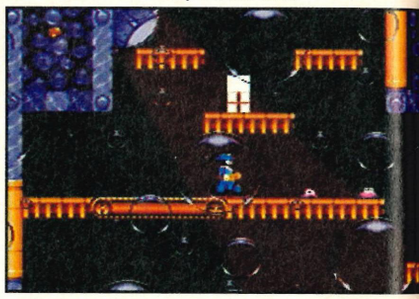
MADNESS - HOU

The boys from Madness may seem unlikely video game characters. Ha, you're very, very wrong.



▲ *Mr. Smash is the new character designed as Carl's alter ego for the purpose of the game.*

▼ *This protective bubble will help you be invulnerable for a short period at least.*



Baggy Trousers as they say! I was never a fan of Madness and I'll admit to finding their records and whole image a bit odd. I'll bow to popular opinion, however, and concede that a whole generation love 'em and slink off back to my Techno in a huff.

I did raise my eyebrows though when I heard that there was a game being based around their exploits and that it would be giant Sheffield software house, Gremlin, that would be responsible for it. What kind of game would you produce to feature those zany popsters?

There haven't really been that many video game/pop star tie-ins before. There was Frankie Goes to Hollywood in the mid-eighties and then Motorhead in 1992 but this is only the third attempt that springs to mind. Personally I can't wait for Rod Stewart – The Game or Manilow Magic II?

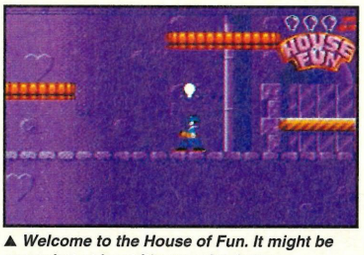
As cult groups go, Madness are one of the most popular and are currently undergoing a bit of a revival, especially amongst the student fraternity. So a game isn't actually that bad an idea if you think about it. Their Madstock concerts back in 1992 started it all up again and they followed this up with the success of their compilation album, Divine Madness, which sold over a million copies in Europe alone.

So what has this got to do with anything I hear you ask. Well, nothing actually but then again a bit of background information never harmed anyone did it?

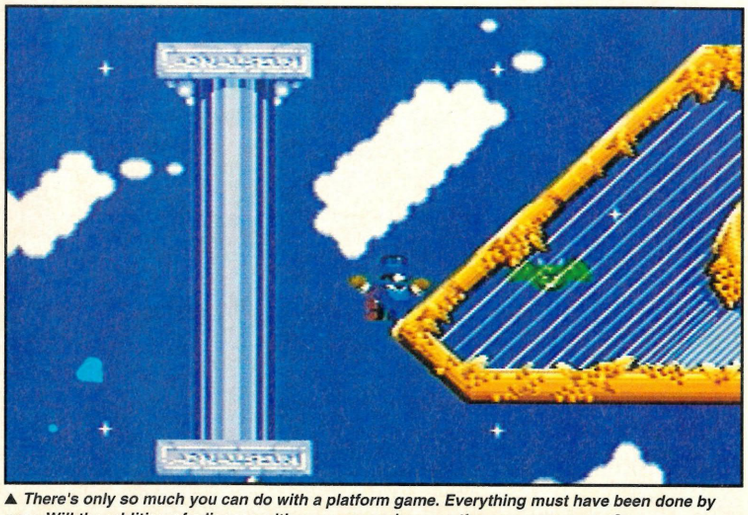
As far as an actual storyline goes, it's all a bit hazy at this stage. The coding has been done and the gameplay's all there but the reasons for exactly doing what you have to do haven't been totally finalised at the moment. We'll tell you what we know now though and as soon as we here any more you'll hear it too.

You'll play a brand new wacky

▲ *No prizes for guessing these are Mega Drive screenshots on show for the first time.*



▲ *Welcome to the House of Fun. It might be corny but at least it's completely true.*

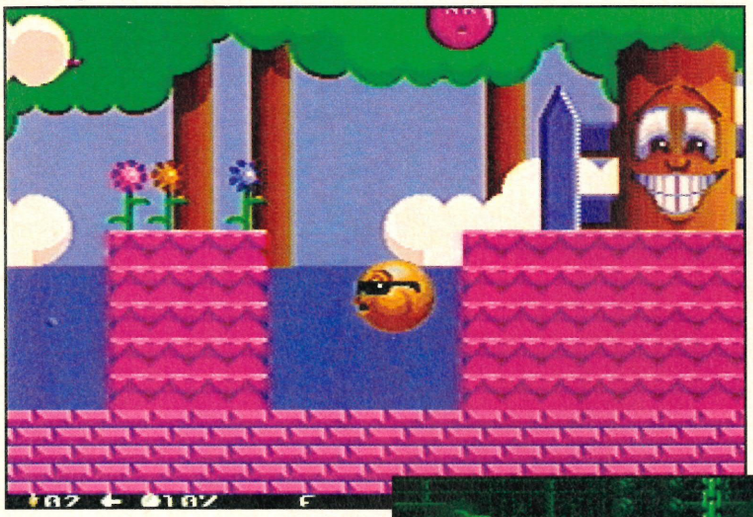


▲ *There's only so much you can do with a platform game. Everything must have been done by now. Will the addition of a licence with a pop group become the new craze or not?*

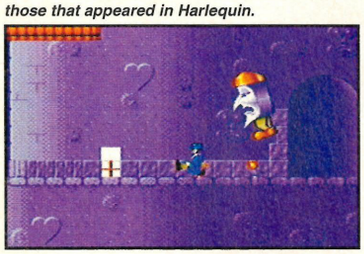
▲ *As you can see the graphics are all pretty spectacular in their appearance.*

USE OF FUN

▼ Madness - House of Fun is quite colourful and looks like it will be Gremlin's next big success on the Mega Drive. Watch out for a full review in the near future.



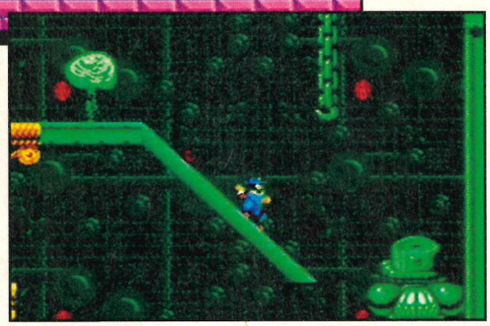
▼ Some of the baddie do look somewhat like those that appeared in Harlequin.



character called Mr. Smash who happens to be based on the alter ego of Carl from the band. That in itself is a little bizarre but it gets around the problem of getting the whole group in there I guess.

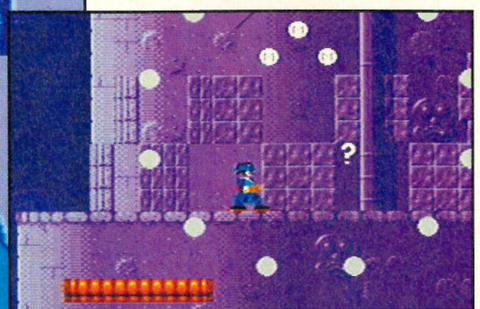
Anyway Smashy must leap around in a familiar platform environment collecting CDs and records to lob at your enemies as they come at you from all sides.

It is possible if you've got access to an Amiga or ST, that you've seen a game called Harlequin, also from the same company. In many ways Madness – House of Fun resembles this earlier offering. I did quite like Harlequin and to be honest, surprised as I was at myself, I enjoyed what I played of this.



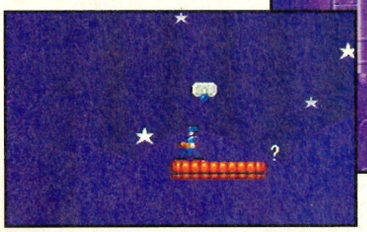
▲ It's all gone green but that doesn't stop Mr. Smash running merrily around.

The Madness theme is portrayed heavily in the musical score accompanying the finished game. Several of Madness' most popular tunes are included and play away in the background to help get all those feet tapping away. House of Fun, Baggy Trousers, Driving in my car, Night boat to Cairo, One Step Beyond and other favourites have all been digitised so Madness fans will go absolutely crazy over this.



▲ There are plenty of power-ups to get your hands on on this particular level.

▼ Remember, this is a very early look at Madness and some things may be changed.



▲ Moving platforms galore. It wouldn't be a decent console game without these babies.

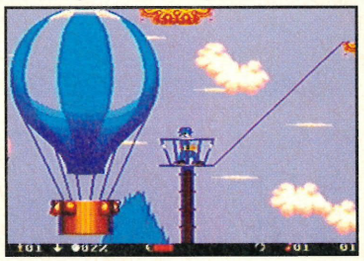
By the time the project is completed there will be 14 sprawling levels that are all sufficiently different with their own individual sets of enemies.

Each level will have its own combination of devious puzzles to get past before it can be completed. It's normal for this type of game to be liberally splashed with hidden rooms and power-ups and Madness - House of Fun is no exception to this rule.

There's nothing like getting stuck in a game to frustrate people. If you're a beginner at this sort of thing then Gremlin have included a unique clue system just to help you out. Little is known about this at this stage but doubtless it will all become clear as time progresses.

We've talked about the sound already so now it's the turn of the visual effects. Graphically the game, as you can see from the screenshots, is a leap around from platform to platform type affair. The character and enemies are nicely drawn and there's plenty of colour in there to make it all look nice.

▼ Hot air baloons are a good mode of transport and can be quite useful at times.



We've seen it all before in a thousand different guises but you'll have to wait until we can get our hands on it for a full review before we can tell you if this interesting experiment has actually come off or not.

It's due for release some time during the first half of this year but no final date has actually been set as yet. Again, as far as the price goes we have no further details but we'll tell you in the news as soon as we get any further information.

Will the Madness game be the next stage in licences? Only time will tell but make sure you watch this space for a full review sometime in the next couple of months.

▼ Leaping from platform to platform Mr. Smash tries to collect his CD's

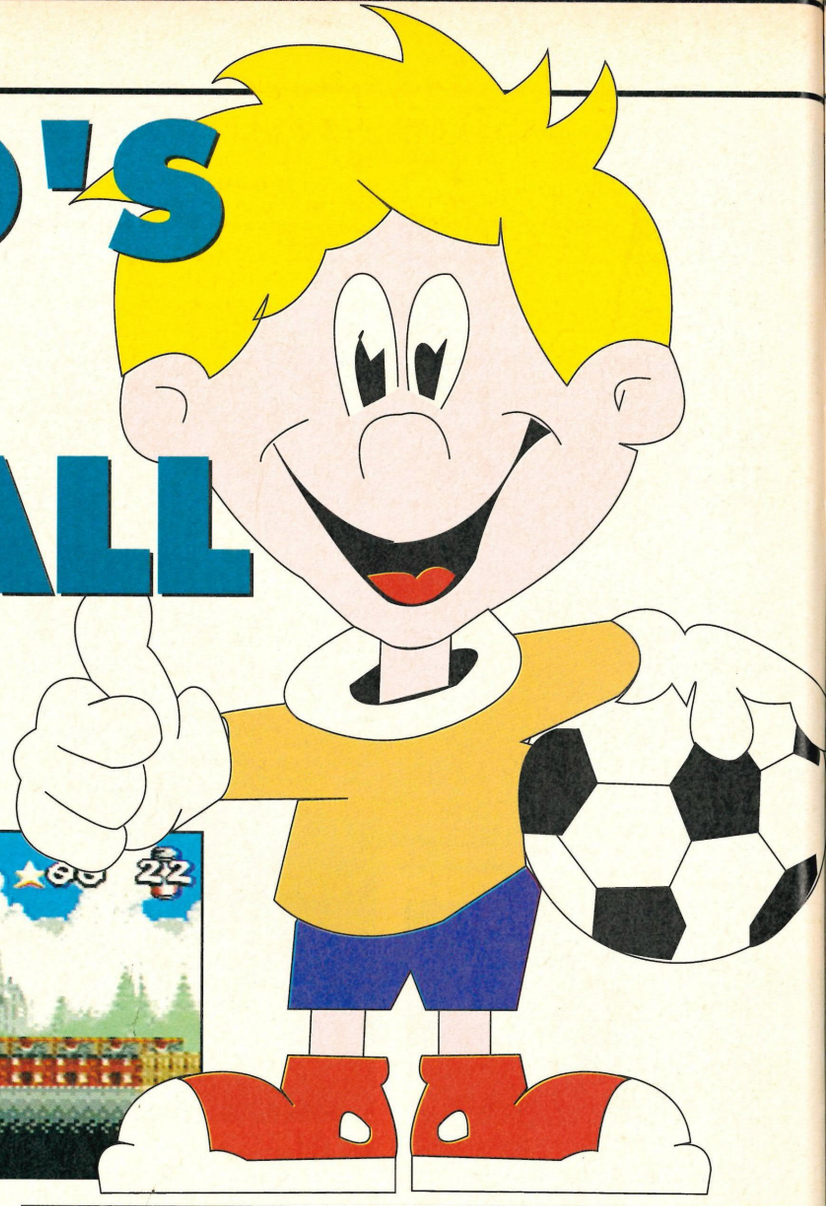
▲ Having reached the top of the ladder where do you go next? You decide!

MEGA VIEW

Madness – House of Fun is another attempt to get pop stars into the lucrative world of video games. I'm not so sure there is a cross-over to be made as anybody who hates Madness may well avoid this game for the simple reason that it is based on them. Having said that companies are always looking out for decent new marketable names and Gremlin have come up with one here. It's a good-looking and sounding game but for a final view you'll have to watch out later in the year. ■ **PAUL**

RELEASE: TBA **PRICE:** £TBA

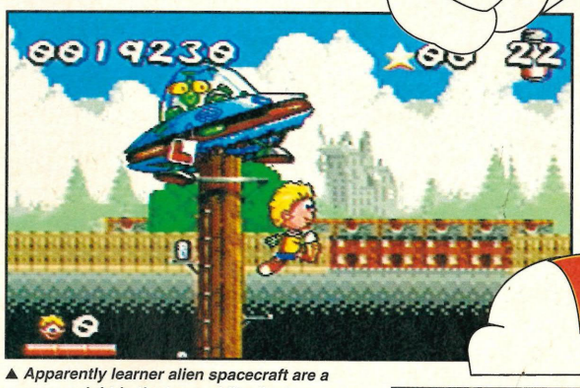
MARKO'S MAGIC FOOTBALL



Q. Which game styles sell the most carts? A. Platformers and footy games. Hang on, I feel an idea coming on.

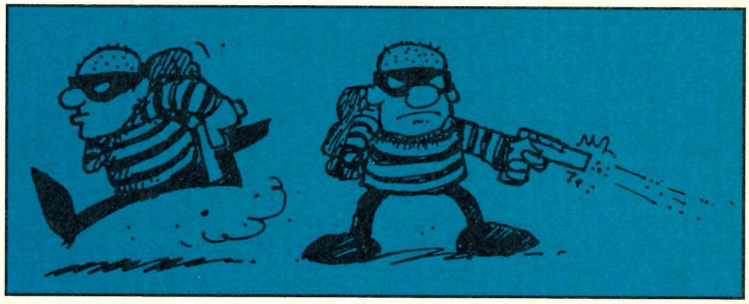
Domark have finally revealed their latest project for the Mega Drive. Based upon a platform style game, Marko's Magic Football introduces a brand new character to the console. Enter Marko, the football mad ten year old. By using his football skills he must travel across his home town of Sterlington to the Toy Factory. When he reaches the factory he must stop the evil Colonel Brown from dumping toxic waste in to the sewers and drains, part of his plan to take over the town.

Apparently Marko was out one day kicking his football down the street when it bounced off down a dark alley. As he ran after his ball, he suddenly saw a couple of strange looking guys over by an open manhole. Staying to watch them, Marko saw them unload huge drums of toxic waste from a lorry and proceed to pour it down into the drains. Some of the green slimey liquid missed the manhole and fell onto an unsuspecting rat. Right in front of Marko's eyes the rat horribly mutated into a slime creature!



▲ *Apparently learner alien spacecraft are a common sight in the town of Sterlington.*

▲ *Those builders don't appreciate young kids wondering around their construction site.*



▲ *One of the original ideas put down on paper for another of Marko's foes in the game.*

Why were they doing this and where had he seen these guys before? He recognised them, of course! They were workers from the mysterious toy factory on top of the hill in North Sterlington.

Marko reckoned that the owner of Sterling Toys, Colonel Brown, is up to no good and he's going to get to the bottom of it. So he sneaked past the two guys, retrieved his ball and headed for the toy factory.

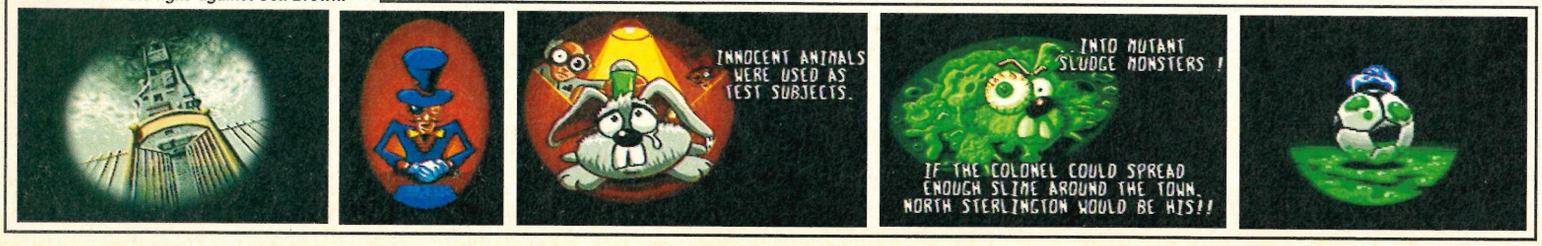
Unknown to Marko, his ball accidentally landed in some of toxic gunge. But instead of mutating, like a living object would, his football gained magical powers. These enable Marko to call back his football at any time, a pretty handy feature later on in the game.

Marko must first use his footy skills to get past all the townsfolk who stand between him and the factory. Policemen on bikes, parcel bomb throwing postmen and naughty kids with toy guns all have to be sorted out along the way.

His adventure then takes him to the more gloomy regions of Sterlington. The cellars and sewers have to be cleared of all the hideous slime mutants that haunt the darkness. The programmers have included several doors in these levels

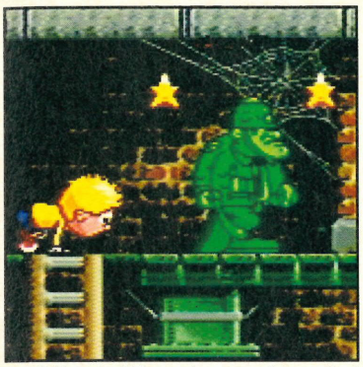
STERLING WORK

Colonel Brown is using the Sterling Toy Facory as a cover for his secret experiments. He has enrolled the help of a very mad professor to conduct the testing. The lethal mixture of highly toxic chemicals affects any living creature but when Marko's football lands in the slime it gains magical powers making it dead useful in the fight against Col. Brown.



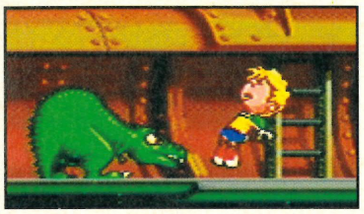
MUTANT HIT LIST

Marko's enemies come in all shapes. Nothing is immune to the slime that Colonel Brown is pumping out. In addition to these animated monsters, in certain zones there are barrels of slime which have to be destroyed before Marko can exit that level. Each level contains a different bunch of slimey characters. Here are a few of them so you know what to expect.

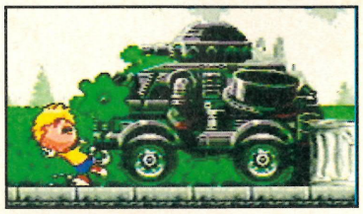


▲ *PC Mutant – This guy has come into contact with the yucky toxic waste. Shoot your ball at him before he mutates into a sludge thang.*

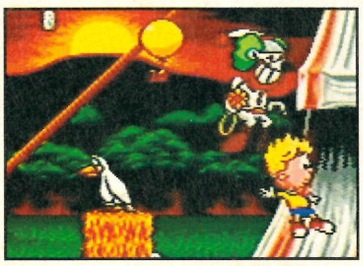
▲ *The Sludge family – These are at the top of Marko's hit list, make sure you get baby sludge thang as well. You can't let them breed.*



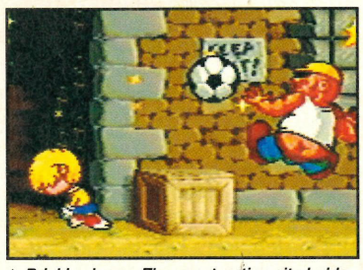
▲ *Jurassic Marko – The slime has even soaked into some dinosaur bones buried beneath the sewers and brought them to life.*



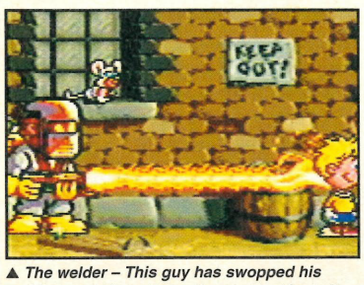
▲ *Slime tank – Make sure that your football skills are up to scratch because the gunge firing tank will take plenty of shots.*



▲ *Clowning about – When Marko visits the circus, he must keep an eye out for any clowns roaming about with gunge guns.*



▲ *Brickies bum – The construction site holds many dangers. Beware the builders bum at all costs. Make sure Marko turns away in time.*



▲ *The welder – This guy has swopped his welding rods for a flame thrower and just sits around waiting to fry the kid.*

▲ *Ghoully ghost – Watch your step when you're deep down in the cellars, ghostly apparitions loom in the darkness.*

which remain closed until you locate the right switch. This forces you to search the whole level to find absolutely all the switches.

Marko is also on a bit of a green mission as well. Throughout each level there are plenty of cans lying about. Collect as many as possible then empty them into the recycling machine at the end of each level for a well earned bonus. Full marks to Marko for being so enviromentally conscious! What a guy!

To give the game more appeal the artists have made all the sprites extra large and as colourful as possible. These seem to be one of the main factors that people look for in a cart, and if they're poor quality then the game suffers. Even when the game is programmed onto the Game Gear, Marko will be staying the same size as he is now.

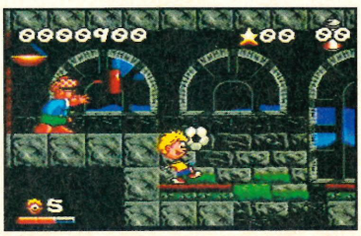
As well as appearing on other formats, Marko may also make an appearance on the magazine racks. Yes that's right, Marko may have his own little comic strip for new adventures with his trusty magic football.

There are still a few more final adjustments to be made to some of Marko's later levels, so the programmers are hoping the game will be finished within a month or so. From then on, the programmers will be able to sit back while the game is prepared for general release.

Marko can be expected to be seen on the streets round about July time. If he's going to appear any sooner, we'll be the first to tell you. So until then, feast your eyes on the screen shots taken from all the levels of a near completed cart.

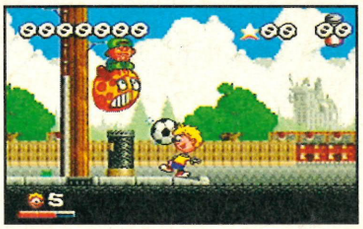
No one will be able to resist this character. A ten year old footballing enviromentally-sound platform kid. This little guy should be an excellent role model to all today's youngsters.

▲ *Collect the cans suspended in the air for when you reach the recycling machine.*

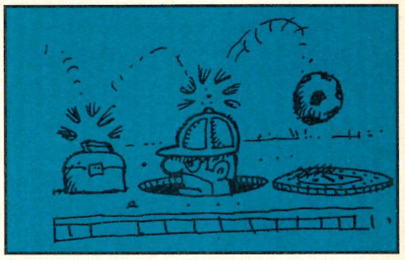


▲ *Once inside the factory, practice those back kicks against the hammer throwing workers.*

▲ *Empty the cans you've collected into the huge recylcing machine to help the enviroment.*



▲ *This pesky kid bounces up and down all day. Hasn't he got any homework to do?*



▲ *The original idea was to use the ball to bounce any obstructions out of the way.*

▲ *Lunatic coppers roam the streets of Sterlington in every shape and form.*

▲ *Creatures straight from the film Alien launch themselves at you from their eggs.*

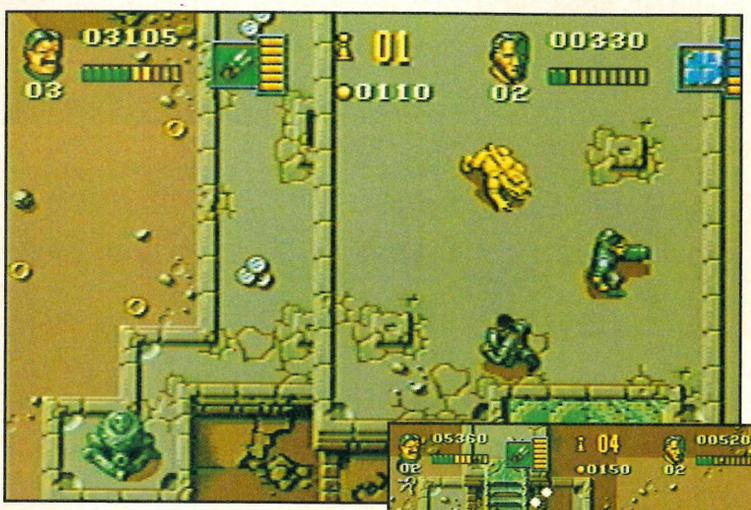
MEGA VIEW

Domark have put together what looks like a winning combination – The good old platform style game mixed in with a large, colourful character equipped with a new style of fighting off the enemies. I mean, only a ten year old could use a football. And as for the bad guys, well there are plenty of new guys to tackle, all with new moves. Everything is looking promising at the moment, so if the schedule runs to plan, Domark's Marko could make it to the top of the league of platform games. ■ **GLEN**

RELEASE: JULY **PRICE:** TBA

THE CHAOS ENG

Their name may not mean much to you but to the gaming industry the Bitmap Brothers are gods, and creators of this...



The Bitmap Brothers are big time on the home computer front. Their award-winning title of last year, The Chaos Engine, sold well on all fronts. Now its Mega Drive incarnation is all set to do the same. It's being shipped out as Soldiers of Fortune in the States but over here there will be no such change. Chaos Engine it stays.

Overhead shoot 'em-ups such as this first became popular in the eighties with the arrival of Commando. Things have progressed now but this offering is the first to produce a computer colleague who actually has some form of decent artificial intelligence.

Chaos Engine always features two, well, Soldiers of Fortune on screen at any one time fighting the enemies. One will obviously be you, while the second will either be controlled by another player or by the CPU.

There will be six characters when it is all finished and any two can be selected at the beginning. The advantage of having an intelligent partner is that the CPU can then pick off tricky enemies, leaving you to concentrate on the easy targets.

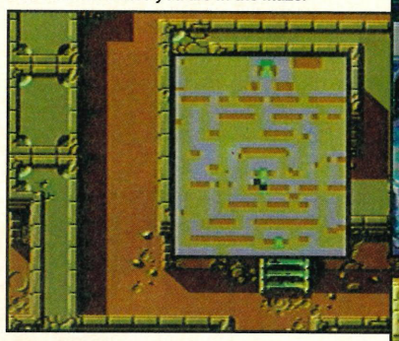
Naturally enough there are disadvantages too. These being that it's nigh on impossible to get your partner into a dangerous situation willy-nilly as they all have a high regard for their own personal safety.

One of the major features of the Chaos Engine is the storyline. It's all too easy to make a game such as this and give it a "rescue the heroine" plot. With this one, however, things are a little more complex.

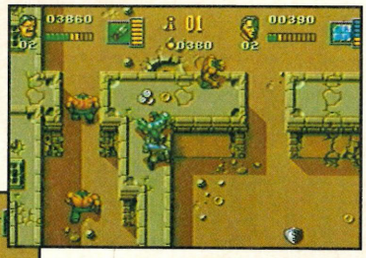
Things have been going strangely wrong with dinosaurs and the like appearing willy-nilly all over the show. Their appearance is eventually tracked down to a time-machine disturbing the very fabric of time. This evil machine is known as The Chaos Engine and is the target for ultimate destruction in this game.

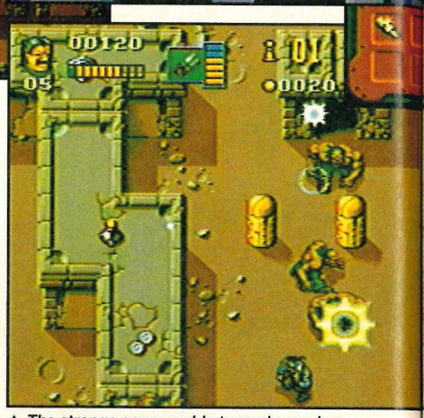
You may well think that games like this are past it but you'd be wrong. Chaos Engine surfaces to breath a fresh new air into the genre. From the character selection at the beginning of the game right down until you blast away through the levels, the atmosphere and sense of urgency created really are special. Still, you'll have to experience the game before you can judge it.

▼ *Calling up a map option may give some indication of where you are in the maze.*



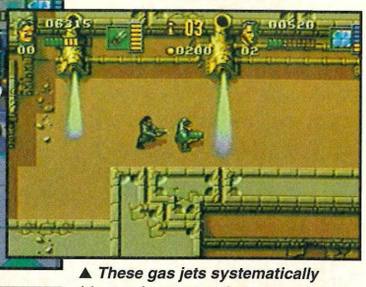
▼ *The game is played at a number of different altitudes. You can't shoot anyone below you.*



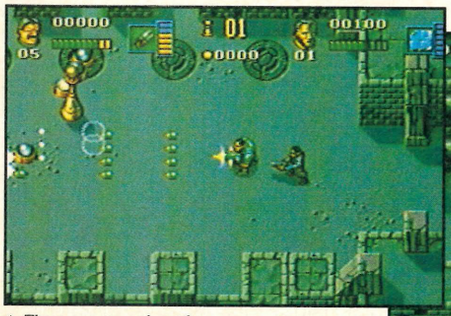


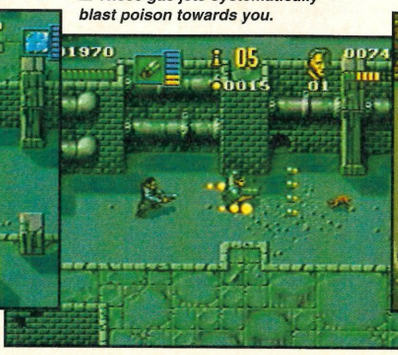
▲ *The strange ogres amble towards you in a menacing and dangerous manner.*

▼ *The appearance of the levels differs wildly from stage to stage. See the Node on the right.*



▲ *These gas jets systematically blast poison towards you.*

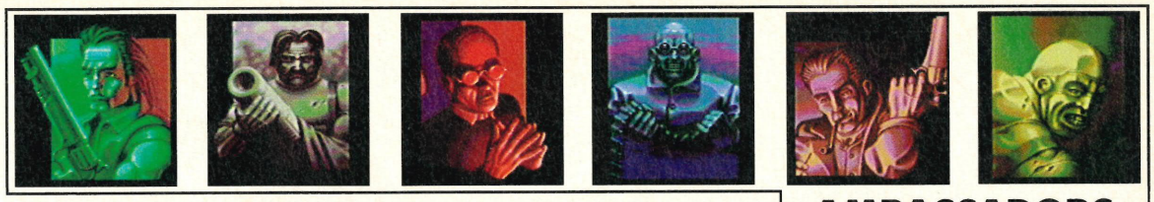




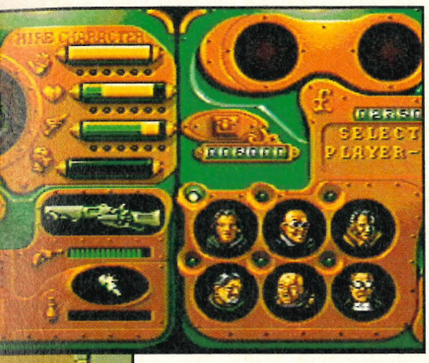
▲ *There are a number of power-ups you can use to wipe out the nastier baddies.*

▲ *These giant frogs leap at your characters.*

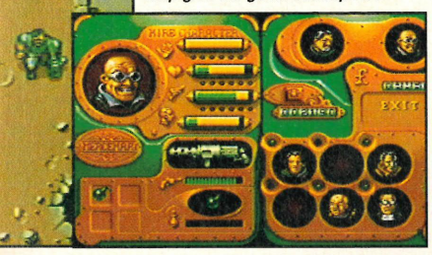
INE



▼ *Everything in Chaos Engine is designed to be user-friendly and easy to follow.*



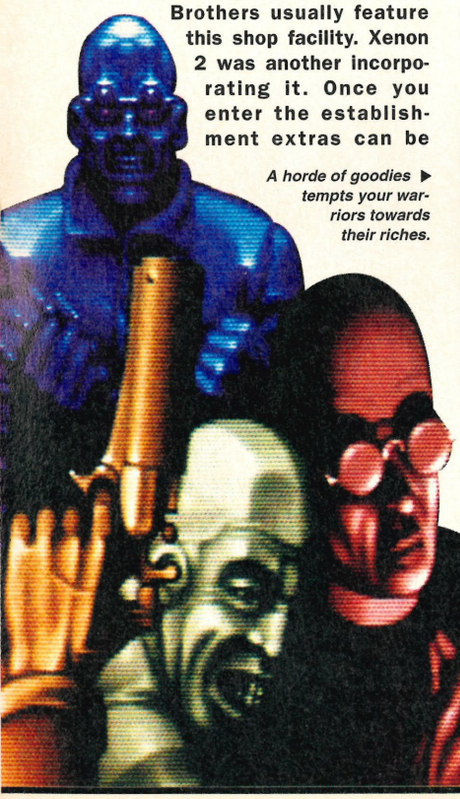
▼ *The Victorian-esque menu panels help give the game atmosphere.*



As you might expect there are a selection of power-ups that have to be collected before you can hope to get very far. Another method of boosting your weapons is by collecting the coins that can be found scattered around the floor. These come in two formats, gold and silver. The gold is obviously worth a lot more. At the end of the level these can be spent in the shop.

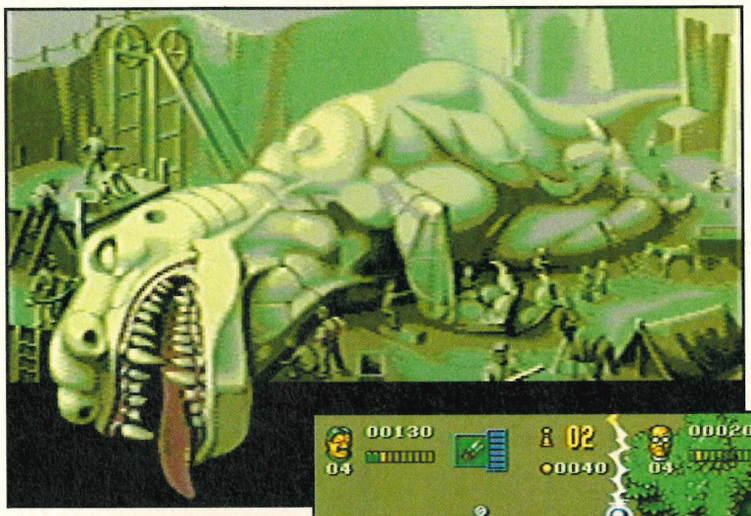
Games designed by the Bitmap Brothers usually feature this shop facility. Xenon 2 was another incorporating it. Once you enter the establishment extras can be bought like new weaponry and even extra lives, providing you have the funds available.

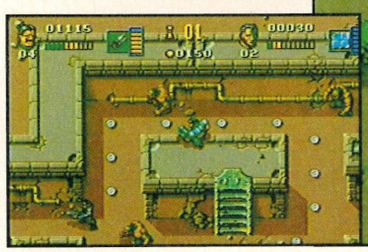
These generally take a bit of saving up for though, as bonuses certainly don't come cheaply. It may be worth sometimes exiting the premises before actually purchasing anything and carrying your money forward to the end of the next level. Assuming of course, you think you can make it in one piece.



A horde of goodies tempts your warriors towards their riches. ▶

▼ *Some of the bad guys explode in a mushroom cloud as your gunfire reaches them.*





▲ *Being on a lower level does not prevent enemy fire from hitting your characters.*

▲ *Before a level can be completed all the Nodes must be shot like on this picture.*

AMBASSADORS OF CHAOS

There are six characters in The Chaos Engine from which to choose from. Each has their own individual characteristics. Some, like The Thug, are slower and more difficult to play (these are stronger and better for the CPU character to take over) while others like The Gentleman are better all-round characters with rounded abilities and a good average skill. Whoever you choose you're assured of some frantic, blasting mayhem ahead of you when Chaos Engine is released in the near future.

▲ *All the character information you need is at the top of the screen.*

As you progress through the levels the game engine adjusts itself. This same difficulty setting was used in Gods to great effect. The later levels will get extremely taxing and only the best gamers will have any chance of surviving to the end of the mission in one go.

Each level can be accessed by a password system, which thankfully means you don't have to battle through it all each time you play. The disadvantage of playing this way is that you don't get the chance to build up your weaponry in time for the later levels and so it has to be weighed up whether it is actually worth it or not.

Chaos Engine looks set to storm the charts when it's eventually released. We'll have a full review for you soon.

▲ *The swamp bubbles away below you. Enemies can pop up from anywhere.*

MEGA VIEW

I liked Chaos Engine on the Amiga and from what I've seen the Mega Drive version lives up to initial expectations. It's been almost ready for quite some time now but MicroProse have waited until now for a release. This is one title that should do exceedingly well upon launch and then stick around in the charts for a good few months. Release schedule permitting we'll have a closer look in next month's issue but until then, trust us on this one. ■ ***PAUL***

RELEASE: TBA **PRICE:** £TBA

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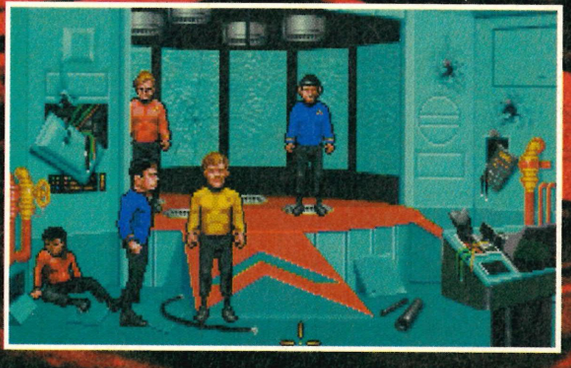

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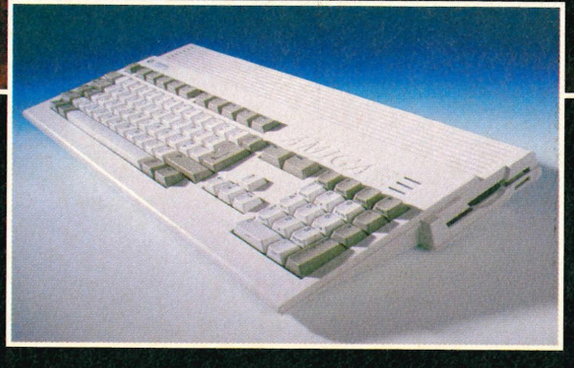


for CD32

AMIGA ACTION

Simply the best for the Amiga... On sale now!

OVER THE edge

No one could ever accuse me of slacking. This month's feature packed OTE has something for everybody. Bungee jumping for the crazy, getting into the music industry for the ambitious and a mind gym for the stressed out. Plus loads of crazy stuff which only the likes of OTE would dare print! D'zine wize, that's on the up as well what with "Q" doing some serious overtime to make these pages look good enough to eat, respekt is definitely due. Yo man, get reading.

THE TRUTH — ON THE RECORD

Gain a foothold in the music industry with pop guru "Mark Hewitt" who has spun discs in some of the leading clubs up and down the country. He's no stranger to this way of life. This massive feature will be broken down into three individual parts:

THE CLUB:
I spent an evening in Manchester's "Royale" nightclub. I'll be taking you through the course of the night telling you about the highs, and of course, the lows.

THE JOB:
Working all night, sleeping all day. Could you handle it? Have you got the skills to keep the crowd moving? Plus some first rate mixing & DJ'ing tips for all you bedroom jocks.

THE GROUP:
Life after Bass Rate. Marky knows the musical climate is due for a change of style. His latest project "Global cut" is his second attempt at breaking into the music market.

FROM DJ TO RECORD PRODUCER...

EDIT'A: BRAD BURTON D'ZINE: "Q" NIGHTCLUB SHOTZ: JOHN "JOHNTY" McGIBBON

THE JOKER. With the stereo booming and the injection err, injecting we made for the club. Parking up in Manchester is never easy, but my good friend Craig decided to run the risk of double yellow parking (tut tut!). We arrived at the club where I was greeted by two doormen 'Big' Dave and 'Smilin' Simon. Since I'm a regular they start the usual banter and highly original gag of impersonating my accent, rolling off a quote or two from one of my TV appearances, as well as the hilarious doorman classic of "Have you any proof of your age?".

Joking aside they let me pass, and I showed the lady on the pay desk my membership card, cutting my entrance cost by half. Passing the cloakroom, I headed for my usual hang out, on the bottom level of the three floors. The tunes were pumping with Mark "anything you wanna' hear between now and two o'clock just let me know" Hewitt dropping the music. It's worth getting in early just to have a giggle at 'that' bloke who's had far too much to drink spannering around on his own, slap bang in the middle of the dance floor.

QUEEN OF HEARTS. Eleven o'clock and time was ticking on. The place was filling. More fist punching (respekt) than a Rocky film went down in the next hour or so as more of my posse turned up, by now there must have been about 15 or so of us hanging around. The women to men ratio 'praps 2:1. Two girls for every boy or so the Beach Boys would have you believe. I got rapping to a couple of tasty ladies – Jenny and Sarah, who worked in a reputable beauty salon or so they said. One of my friends wanted to get talking to 'em, but he didn't have the bottle to do anything about it, opportunity missed. But with so many different people, who knows what top laughs the evening holds?

Musicwise, it depends what you're in to. Don't expect any hardcore rap/rave, the majority of stuff is chart but now and again you'll get to hear some cool underground stuff. The sets vary, you'll hear five or six well mixed soul tunes followed by a few techno tunes, only to be chased by a mad half hour for all the "C'mon Eileen" fans and there's no shortage of Weheeeeeeeey as Lulu's "Shout" refuses to die with any honour.

Something for everyone, but when the music I hate starts blaring, it's time to do a few 'laps' walking round checkin' everything out. Dancewise, there's plenty of space to strut yo' stuff. The main dancefloor is absolutely massive, but there are a couple of smaller floors. Everywhere you look you'll see a budding John Travolta along with some real sad lads taking their dancing far too seriously whilst making sure their bleached blonde hair isn't out of place every 10 seconds.

With 2,000 or so people beered up, it's inevitable from time to time that there's gonna be some trouble. But from what I could gather this evening was completely without trouble. This isn't down to any strong arm security tactics, as the doormen don't wear black gorilla suits. Classy shirts and sharp grey jackets are the order of the day. They've certainly managed to get the medium when overseeing the club, relying on a low key approach to quash any trouble before it starts, instead of scaring everybody into behaving themselves. Don't get me wrong if it did go down they'd sort it out, but it rarely comes to that.

KING OF CLUBS. After the slowy's (Hehe) at about 2:15am we made good our escape to McDonalds. The weekend was over as far as clubbing went, but what a way to end it. So, if you're ever in Manchester and fancy a safe night why not give it a look in, a fun night guaranteed. You don't have to be a member to get in, but it'll cost you £6 otherwise. Once inside you can join free of charge, simply fill in a form at the membership desk and you'll be given a well smart credit card type card which entitles you to cut price entrance and better still free drinks. Sometimes!

Yea, go on spoil yourself and get down to the funky sound, who knows you may even catch me chillin', if so, why not buy me a drink? Just a coke mind, it's my turn to drive! (Snigger).

DISCOTHEQUE ROYALE, PETER ST. TWO MINS WALK FROM G-MEX. CALL 061-839-1112 FOR DA' GEN'

The "Funky Bunch" doing it Royale style!

DJ Mark Hewitt on the wheels of steel, cutting it up one time, etc, etc...

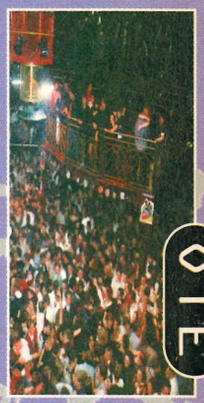
THE JOB

Mark Hewitt, is noted throughout club circles for being able to move any crowd. Undoubtedly he's one of the North's elite jocks. He started his career 10 years ago, going mobile around Birmingham and surrounding areas. "I recall buying a box of records from a jumble sale and decided I wanted to work as a DJ. Borrowing my parent's car I managed to gain quite a reputation around Brum, then after a couple of years I was offered a job working in a club in Spain" he said. "Sun, sand and other things that begin with 'S' tempted me away from my hometown. I was working 12 hour long days, from 6pm all the way through. Although the hours were long the perks were amazing, free beer and food but the money was terrible."

As he continues to explain "I remember one particular evening when the dance floor was crammed, I'd just done a superb mix, well pleased with myself because the crowd were buzzing. Turning around to get another 12 inch, I caught the player arm with my shirt cuff, this caused me to pull the deck off the surface and send it crashing towards the floor, ruining the deck and of course the evening. Eight hundred sweaty unhappy dancers making their way out of a club doesn't do anything for your career. Whoops, just one of many "occupational hazards" you'll encounter if you ever get in to this line of work.

Tsk, bouncers!

Here are a few tips I can offer you; practise your mixing, clean it up, match those beats and don't forget about your club patter, there are too many big mix DJ's out there at the moment – Sasha, Carl Cox the list goes on. Going up against those guys will be futile, so practise your microphone voice, to yourself if need be. Don't pigeon hole yourself into a particular type of DJ. Learn to mix different types of music, soul, rap, pop whatever, buy a couple of tunes and experiment. J'ing can be a highly paid job, but experience is the key during the early days. Money won't be that clever either. Unfortunately, most clubs won't even look at you until you've got experience. Catch 22 situation really. However mobile is probably your best chance at entering into the scene, don't forget that."

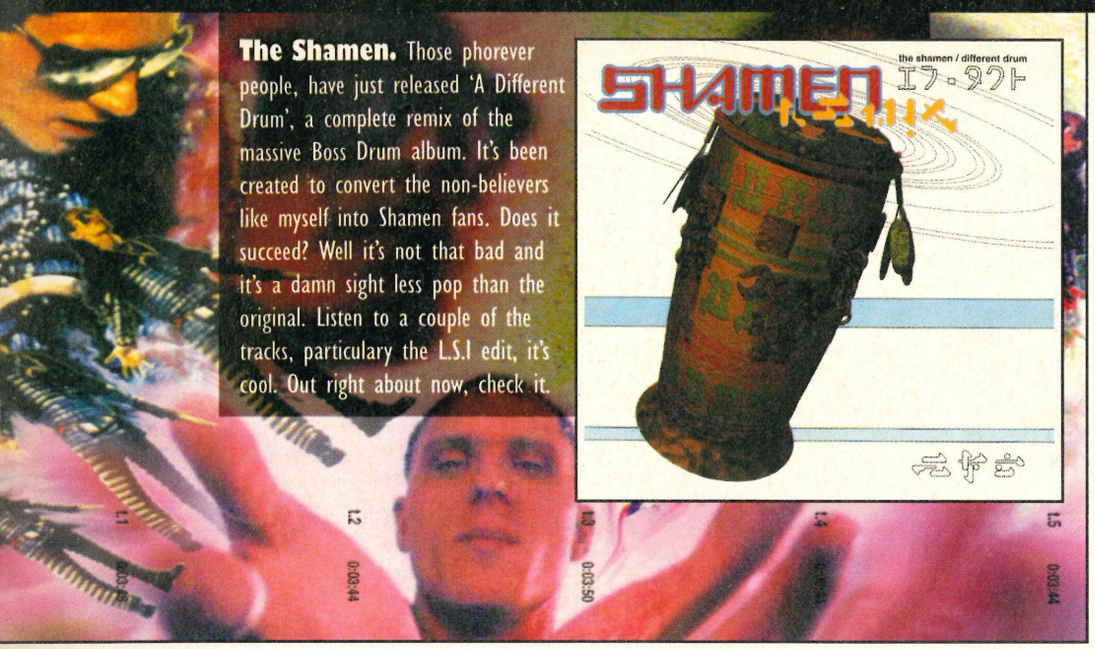


Global Cut, unfortunately Yenna was washing her hair!

THE GROUP

During '93, Manchester clubland was gripped by a quality dance tune – Rhythm Nation from Bassrate. After this Jonathon Colling, the main driving force behind the group, decided it was time to move on. Talking over a few beers in the Royale Mark and Jon both expressed an interest in creating music. Having a good ear for tunes, Mark realised Jonathon was hot property, and talks were made to form a production team to cover all aspects of dance music. "Global Cut" is the result of the partnership and their first record under the label Octagon Music Productions is "Elation". It features Manchester vocalist "Yenna" and rapper "Spider D". A techno/dance anthem that's rocking dancefloors wherever it's played, even though it's still at demo stage. OMP are currently looking into doing remixes and original CD-ROM music for games and are just waiting for the phone to ring. Anyone interested? With Elation hitting the shops within the next couple of months, the pair are looking forward to their first Top of the Pops appearance. Move over D-Ream, you're about to get cut, globally, by what is arguably the hottest dance act in Manchester.

OCTAGON MUSIC PRODUCTIONS ARE WAITING FOR YA' CALL 061-980-6237 (JONATHON COLLING)



The Shamen. Those phorever people, have just released 'A Different Drum', a complete remix of the massive Boss Drum album. It's been created to convert the non-believers like myself into Shamen fans. Does it succeed? Well it's not that bad and it's a damn sight less pop than the original. Listen to a couple of the tracks, particulary the L.S.I edit, it's cool. Out right about now, check it.

Space food. As used by NASA, this is the same stuff that went up to the moon! Even astronauts enjoy pud so it comes as no surprise that three flavours of freeze dried ice cream are available. It'll stay fresh for about two years and Pot Noodle fans all over the universe will rate 'em as you can eat it straight out of the bag. £8.95 for three packets.

STUFF

OTE

Magicool. Instant cool in a can! It's the latest craze US style and a proposed Summer launch in the UK is set to start the trend off on this side of the Atlantic. It's as easy as shaking the can and pressing a button. Estimated UK price point £5.00. As far as environmentalists are concerned they'll have no problem with it. No CFC's or even HCFC's for that matter! There's no point in cooling yourself if you end up warming the atmosphere, know what I'm sayin'? Just the ticket for those sweaty, bangin' raves.

Celebrity Spoofs. Coming soon from the US are these 7 inch dolls which take the mickey out of celebrities from all walks of life. Nobody is safe, if you're famous you're gonna be spoofed. That's the message coming from creator Dennis Glasberg who lives in the Dix Hills area of NY. All in all there are 19 individual familiars including Michael (nuff said) Jackson, Madonna and even big Arnie. Retailing at $15.00 a piece you'll find them a little out of pocket-money range. I'm told that each is anatomically correct in every detail, I wonder how they researched that? Hmm. I'm sure none of the fella's would peek up Madonna's skirt.

OTE world- - -

There's a wacky old law that's still to be revoked which states it's illegal for women to smoke in public. Only in America, New York to be exact. Needless to say thousands of women are guilty of this misdemeanour each and every day.

The South African Ribbon Worm doesn't worry too much about food shortages, because in times of hardship it can consume upto 95% of its own body and still survive. Ugh, Hannibal Lecter eat your heart out!

If you're planning on setting up a new business I'd probably give central London a miss. On average it costs about £50 a year to pay for the office space a reasonably small wastepaper basket takes up. Craziness.

FREE GOODIES. Five Shamen goody bags and one of those Mindlab thingies are cluttering the space under my desk, so I've took it upon myself to give 'em all away. To win one of 'em all you've to do is send in a package of any old, but unusual rubbish you've got hanging around your house. Eg: Old Star Wars figures, photo's of attractive women and other stuff like that, crappy pencil sharpeners or grotty old soup tins will not be accepted. The more interesting the clobber, the more chance you have of winning, crazy huh? I like receiving packages you know, I get all excited. Usual address. Get rooting. Respekt.

IF YOU'RE IN A POSITION TO SUPPLY 'STUFF' TO OVER THE EDGE. CALL BRAD ON 0625-878888 X 314.

Perfect for stressed out brains

MIND HOW YOU GO

Tons of strange things land on the OTE sorting desk each and every day so by now I thought I'd have seen everything that could freak me out.

Then a press release from Lifetools arrived about a brain exerciser called the Mindlab. Now if you think about the whole concept of a gymnasium for your mind then you've no doubt started blowing it already. Lifetools' main man Chris Payne and his missus Geraldine invited me to their cosy office for a session. I really didn't know what to expect, I mean I've heard of stuff like this before but never really had the opportunity to try it out. Since I was obviously sceptical, he showed me the gadget explaining what everything was. The device consists of three individual parts, earphones, wraparound shades with built-in L.E.D's, and a solid state box of electronic gizmotry which contains 50 hypnotic programs and an array of freaky sounds. Placing the glasses and earphones on my head and tapping a couple of buttons, I was away. Instantly the sound kicked in, as did a high pitch whine, then weird spirals and shapes seemed to be projected into my mind!

Seven and a half minutes later the lights faded as did the now low pitch noise. I felt relaxed which is a tad bizarre because I just didn't expect it to work. Have you ever stared at the flickering flames of an open fire and been fixated into a sort of enjoyable trance. That's really the only way of explaining the kind of effects I was feeling at the time. More research was needed, so I loaned a unit for a month using it for at least 20 minutes each day. I recorded my findings and broke them down into the five individual "mind" modes.

SLEEP. When used for just 20 minutes it gently slows your brain down in order to induce a state of deep sleep. It's amazing how the process put me to sleep with ease even in strange or noisy locations.

RELAX. An electronic form of Horlicks this one. After driving home one evening I got cut up by some XR3i nutter. This really gets to me. After a day like that I need more than a hot mug of some awful malt drink to chill out, so I decided to give it a short blast on this setting. Ten minutes later... don't ask me how, the lights had managed to soothe my troubled mind.

VISUALIZE. The most sensational of all the programs especially when combined with a high pitch sound. Prior to use on this option I read a rather short story – then I managed to recall scenes from the book and visualize them clearly in my imagination!

ENERGIZE. My doctor keeps on telling me how bad caffeine is for my health. This is where ML can help by using its electronic stuff to pick you up and give you a hi-tec kick!

LEARN. The Learn facility is a superb antidote to pre-exam trauma. Not only does it help you focus your thoughts more clearly but it actually relaxes your brain without turning off the par that takes in all the input. With the addition of an 'A' level Chemistry audio tape rolling on the background it's the perfect learning tool.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

I've read loads of documented material and even had the process explained to me. But it's something to do with EHG brainwaves and complicated stuff like that. Somehow through a well researched method, the lights and sound do their funky stuff. Nothing religious or spiritual about it, as it can all be explained by physics. But be fair – I've only got six pages. Questions surrounding the machine's safety were raised by most people who I had shown the Mindlab to, but tests have proved them to be perfectly safe. Yet Lifetools have a policy of not supplying to epilepsy sufferers.

CONCLUSION. Although initially apprehensive I think the Mindlab really is an aid to the modern way of life. I'm not saying it's everyone's cup of tea but it's certainly worth a blast, especially when you consider there's a 15 day money back guarantee. If for any reason you don't like 'em, just slap them straight in the post and you'll get a full refund. Effects do vary from user to user and rest assured there will be be lots of "ooh, it can't do your eyes any good" from complete outsiders. As far as I'm concerned it didn't do mine any harm. Solely for leisure use or even as a deep relaxation tool, a Mindlab is a superb way of surviving the stress of everyday life. An excellent addition to any self respecting techno-hippy's gizmo collection.

MINDLAB'S AVAILABLE FROM £230. CALL LIFETOOLS ON 0625-858885 THEY'LL FILL IN ANY BLANKS!

Nervous? Me, nah... Don't be silly!

JUMPING FOR JOY

"Hundreds of feet in the air with almost one thousand people waiting to see me throw myself out of the relative safety of the crane. Crazy! The moment of truth had come, no time for excuses now. I really didn't have any option. I had to go whether I wanted to or not."

Brad Burton

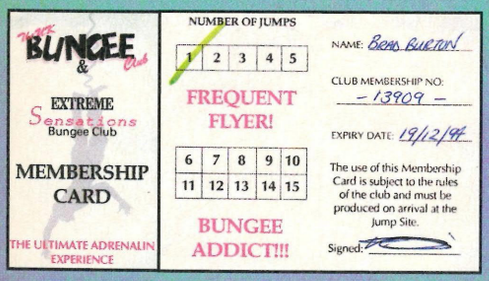
My nerve only started to go as the crane reached its peak. It was at that point, I vented my fear out loud, and repeated a certain expletive three times.

Man, up there it was so cold, but that didn't matter when you consider that I'd be jumping off within the next 30 seconds for a buzz. I couldn't back out now, geez I'd be the laughing stock of the whole office especially after all my macho bravado. Churning through my mind during the waiting time was; "If the rope snaps, I'm dead". If you hadn't already realised this was Bungee Jumping.

Before you make your way up to the sky you've got to book in. From the warmth of a Bungee Club van you give relevant personal details and get a brief talk through the jump procedure. It's then time to read all the warning notices and whack your signiture on a disclaimer (I hate those). Then it's onto the scales, assessing your weight and in turn the best elastic for the job. I was given a pair of colour coded waistcoats, which signified to the jump master exactly what rope to use. My hand was then stamped "Checked". Outside I crossed over the crowd control fences before being weighed yet again. The two weights tallied and so the fantastic elastic rope was gathered together. Then some 'club bloke approached me and talked me through what he was doing, placing what seemed like shackles around my ankles and pulling them tight. It was at this point I thought to myself: "Another page of video reviews would have been a damn sight easier."

Arrrrrrrgggggggghhhh. In the background another screaming first timer plunged towards the ground. The crane lowered... It was now my time. A young lady was gently lowered onto a small airbag relieved to be back on terra-firma. Time to go but not before another rope check. "Airmail" – that's what was then stamped on my hand, no doubt funny the first time you see it, but this was no time for laughs. Hopping towards the steel cage, I said my farewells. Inside the box, the door was locked and only then did the platform begin to rise. The jump master said: "When I open the gate you've to position your toes over the edge. Then when I say 3...2...1... bungee, you launch yourself out head first, ok?". "Yes" I said but it wasn't, I was scared stupid! This was absolutely potty, jumping out of a ridiculously high crane for a laugh. Hilarious!

3...2...1... bungee. The worst/best bit is when you intially descend. It's only when the rope takes your weight that you actually feel safe. My life flashed before my eyes... **"Believe it".** That's where the real hit comes from, the danger element, and although I enjoyed the "Jump" I was glad when my feet touched the ground. Bungee is certainly one of those things I'd recommend to do, even if you only do it the once, it's certainly a heart stopping thrill. Why not give the Bungee Club's head office a bell, they'll be able to tell you more about any local events. Tell 'em I sent you, they may give you a discount.... Probably!



DROPPING PRICES. To jump you must become a club member. £14 is the going rate for 12 months membership, also insuring you for a year and entitling you to jump for the bargain of £25 a time!

LAST WORDZ

The OTE hotline has been ringing non-stop. If it keeps up I'm gonna be forced to get my own Personal Assistant soon. He he, any offers ladies? Next month, If all goes well I'll be in possession of a Lucid Dream Machine (LDM). This natty little device is worn at night and is used to induce dreams that are so vivid you'll wonder whether you're asleep at all, wild huh? Plus a face 2 face interview with an ex-con who has been banged up for 23 hours a day in the notorious Strangeways. Also I'll feature the latest toys from the States you're on-line for a massive read. Anyway you know the score, be seeing ya next month, outy. BRAD.

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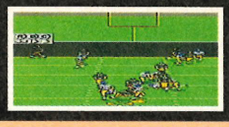

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Violent crimes and attacks are on the up

STREET FIGHT

. . . learn to defend yourself on the street

"STREET FIGHT" is a hard hitting, effective instructional VHS video that will present you with a variety of techniques to defend yourself on the street. Figures on violent street crimes are going up fast, "Street Fight" is an invaluable video guide for any man or woman who wishes to learn street survival techniques. Without expending the time, expense and academic discipline involved in joining a Martial Arts School.

With fights common place nowadays in bars and clubs, the "Street Fight" video will help you deal with such situations, debunking the common myth that there is one magic shot that will drop someone every time. This video demonstrates which techniques work best against specific targets on the human body. The instructors, Peyton Quinn and Mike Haynack, are black belts in a variety of martial arts and have worked as bouncers in some of the most violent bars and roadhouses from New Jersey to Texas.

★ Discover the best defensive methods.
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★ Recognise how people move during an attack and much more.

The "Street Fight" video also shows you how to exploit the vulnerable points of the human body. "Street Fight" shows you moves that **will** put an attacker down.

The video demonstrates various techniques showing not only where to strike, but also how to create an opening for an attack. All types of combat techniques are covered.

WARNING: Some of the techniques in the film are only appropriate for life threatening situations. Therefore the video is for information purposes only.

Although some of the above techniques may seem harsh, in a confrontational situation, you need to protect yourself. "Street Fight" will show you how. Can you afford to be without it? Order today.

Yes I would like to learn to defend myself on the street. Please rush me _____ VHS copies of "STREET FIGHT".
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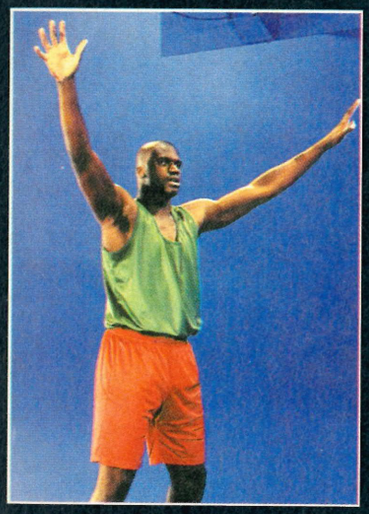
EA SPORTS
ELECTRONIC ARTS

THE ULTIMATE LIN

Americans are sports mad! Most bars and restaurants have the obligatory TV, the clientele craning their necks to catch the action. Their stars enjoy god-like status plus salaries and endorsements worth millions. Michael Jordan alone is reputed to be worth $100,000,000

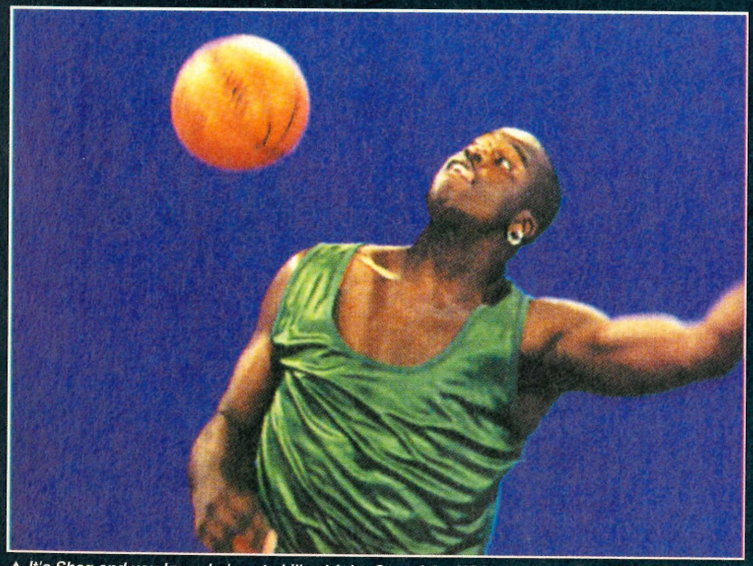


▲ *It's none other than EA Sports new signing Shaquille O'Neal strutting his stuff.*

Even a headline-making alleged multi-million gambling habit can't make a dent in his salary. Exploiting what is a national obsession has proved to be an incredibly lucrative line of business for the likes of video game manufacturers.

On the outskirts of San Francisco, an arm extends from Silicon Valley stretching into San Mateo. "The Industrial Centre of the West", states a chalked white message on a facing hill. This hangover from the 1930's refers to San Francisco's big industry, steel, used to build North American railroads and the city's most famous landmark, the spectacular Golden Gate Bridge. Today, nestled in the valley, it's the computer and electronics centre of the world. Here, at 1454 Fashion Island, Electronic Arts has its home.

EA Sports is arguably the most successful software label in the industry and considering it specialises in just one theme, sport simulations, the fact is all the more incredible. Scott Orr, the Executive Producer of the Madden series reckons "...Sport simulations are



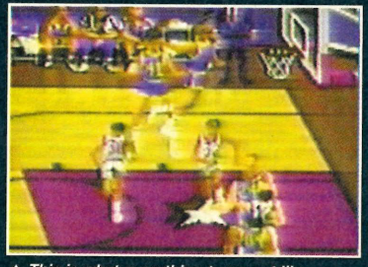
▲ *It's Shaq and you know he's got skills alright. One of the USA's highest paid NBA stars.*

▼ *It's the man himself. John Madden is now a big-time Mega Drive sports personality.*

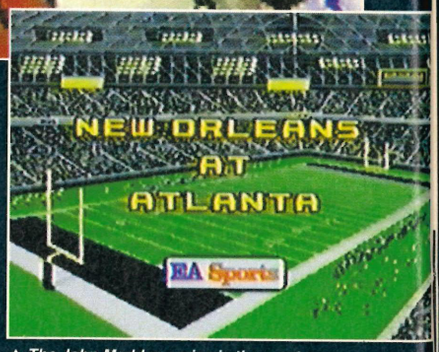
undoubtedly the most rapidly growing section of the industry and the success of EA Sports has been instrumental in this. We started the Madden series at a time when video gaming amounted to beat'em-ups or shoot'em-downs, the traditional coin-op themes. Sport games on the other hand were either push button sprint frenzies or strategic, sedentary manager-style games which lacked any physical action.

Both styles found their niche, but we were the first to experiment with combining coaching and physical action, although this meant turning existing technology inside out."

The first in what has turned into an immensely popular series, John



▲ *This is what everything turns out like. Basketball on the Mega Drive.*

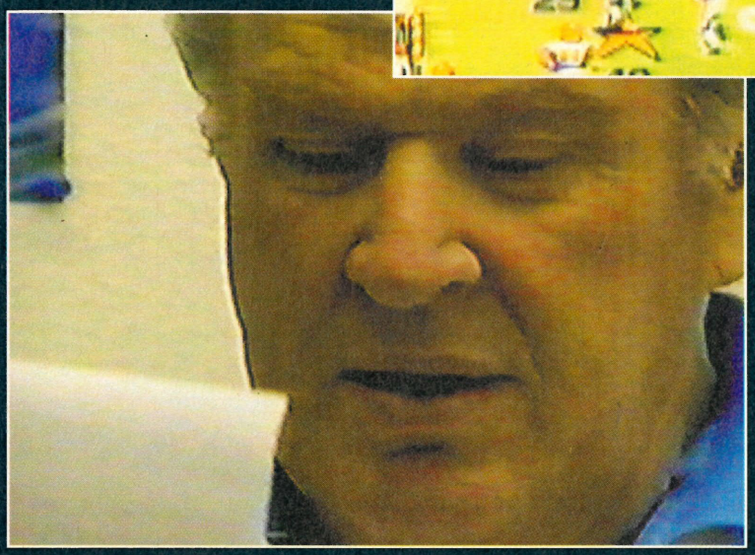


▲ *The John Madden series is the most popular od EA Sports globally successful range.*

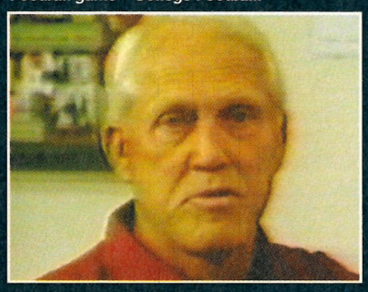
Madden's Football, was nothing short of revolutionary. It was one of the top sellers of the year. "We approached John Madden expecting to be turned down point blank, but he was so approachable, open and enthusiastic, we knew we were on to something." Madden insisted on being involved in the project and the team, although initially apprehensive, soon discovered Madden's help was pretty invaluable. Orr freely recalls that. "He would regularly contact us with an idea or fax over some 'plays' and team tactics to incorporate in the game and the team built a Madden game portfolio into the program."

A profile of the cutting-edge of sport simulation design, EA Sports. They're the best and most consistent company in the business. Jason Spiller reports from San Francisco.

E-UP



▼ *Bill Walsh now stars in his very own Football game – College Football.*



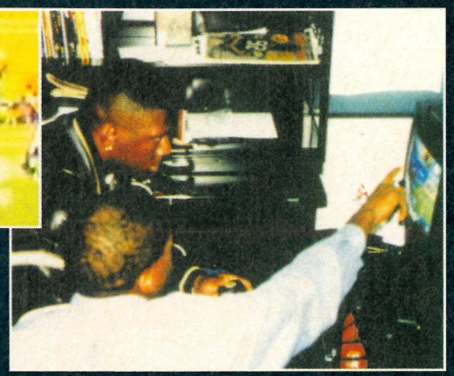
The result was a true reflection of Madden's influence over a football team and the tempo of the games mirrored the real thing. Success was a forgone conclusion. In the States, Madden is a guru of the sport, a footballing god.

What really surprised EA Sports was the way the game took off in Europe. As Scott says "They may not have heard of Madden, but US sport and football especially was just hitting Europe and the UK and we like to think that the Madden series has gone some way to getting people really interested in this great sport."

▲ *Work on the new basketball product continues with the experts at EA Sports.*

The New York Jets recently had a Madden tournament which was every bit as competitive as on the field. Scott explained to me that: "The players that feature in the games are very keen to keep us up to date with their play statistics and health status, their competitive edge is a great example to the designers and it really adds to the fun of the job." Good to know eh?

The remarkable success of the Madden series was a real confidence booster and the designers, brimming with confidence, began researching into different sports. The Man from EA he say "The message we were getting back was that a cart which had been almost entirely aimed at an age group of between 10 and 18 had reached those aged 30 and over, broadening the target market tremendously.

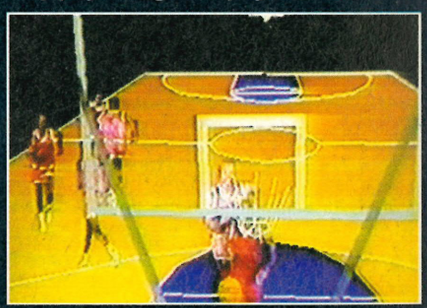


▲ *A whole host of American Stars have put their names to products in the past.*

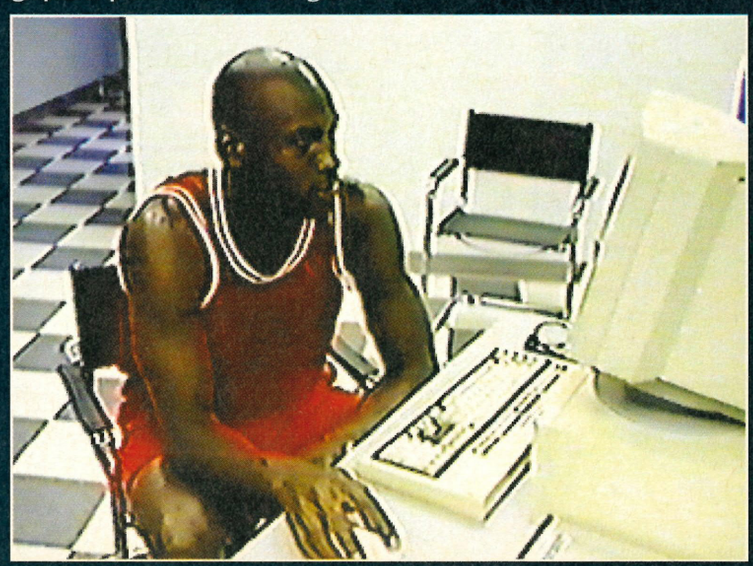
If EA Sports needed futher encouragement then this success certainly provided it, projects ranging from ice-hockey to golf commenced with all haste. Orr explained "On the success of Madden and its promotion strength of the sport outside the States, our ice-hockey project was endorsed by the sports governing body NHL, which is now in its 3rd version, called NHL 94. Although we could modify the statistical side of the game based on Madden, the graphical presentation of the game and the engine had to be entirely different technology."

EA Sports returned to Gridiron action this time endorsed by revered 'College Rules' coach Bill Walsh. Determined not to stand in Madden's shadow the game was a quick-fire action bonaza, with some great new visual techniques including a 360 degree roving replay offering changeable field views. So why the change? Orr responded "Bill Walsh offered the opportunity of fine-tuning the football engine while presenting game fans with a new angle on the game and insight into Walsh's own theories and game tactics."Ah-hah!

Bill Walsh features fast-paced, wide-open play with lateral, 'one-step play calling' and 'play-call bluff-



▲ *Some stunning effects have been created across the formats EA have worked with.*



▲ *It's not your regular computer users clothing but each to their own I suppose.*

EA SPORTS
ELECTRONIC ARTS

▼ *Latrell Sprewell and Byron Houston may not be household names here but over there...*

ing', its a different game to Madden... played on the hoof.

EA Sports games are becoming a social institution, the so-called 'poker parties of the 90s'. In recognition of this the team has devised the highly-popular 4-Way Play adaptor enabling up to four players to take part simultaneously.

Now all EA Sports team games support the 4-Way Play which brings a new level of competitiveness. Scott Orr describes the EA titles as more than superficial arcade entertainment. "We recognized early that our games appealed to real sports fans and we've gone to extraordinary lengths to mirror real-life."

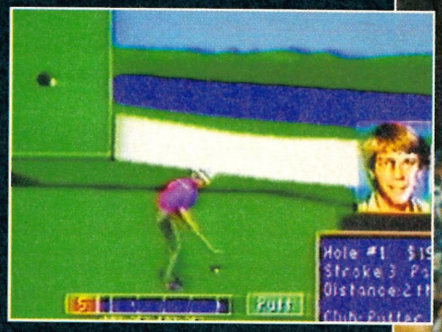
This formula has become EA Sports hallmark. Competition is modelled on actual match-ups, they use real names and games are based on real players. Their signature moves and distinctive talents are fully duplicated and matches are announced by lifelike commentators, renowned for their knowledge. Players can draw from an extensive repertoire of plays suggested by the likes of Madden and Walsh.

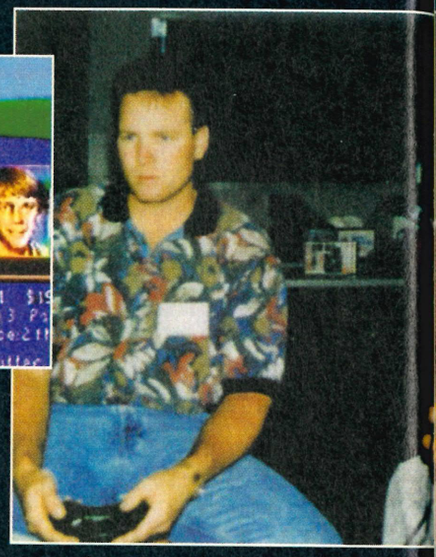
With great conviction the EA Sports team has plunged into new areas of sport ranging from Formula 1 racing to PGA Tour Golf. Scott remember he'd begun to think that "With Madden in its fourth version, NHL in its third and NBA in its fourth, it was time to diversify."

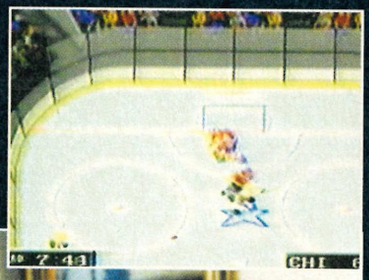
FIFA Soccer was released in late '93 to tremendous critical acclaim and commercial success, and at the CES Las Vegas 94, PGA Golf Tour and Mario Andretti Racing were proudly announced.

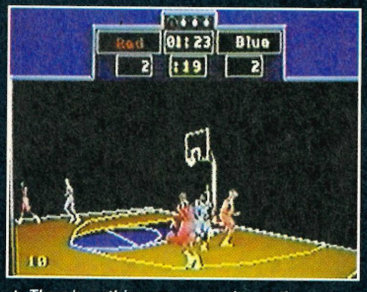
Scott Orr is particulary fond of PGA Tour, reminiscing on its drawing-board stage he said "the score was to deliver the definitive video game fairway action with a good balance of strategy, skill and play. It's a whole new ball game for the team,

▼ *Golf has been well done but never better than PGA Tour which cleaned the board.*





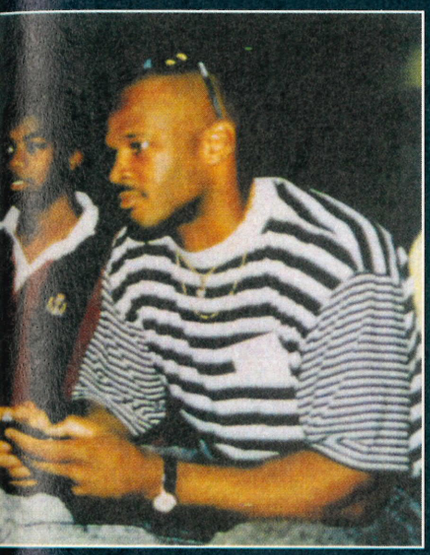




▲ *There's nothing more popular at the moment than basketball for the Mega Drive.*

▲ *Ice Hockey star Luc Robitaille of the LA Kings likes a game of NHL Hockey in his spare time.*

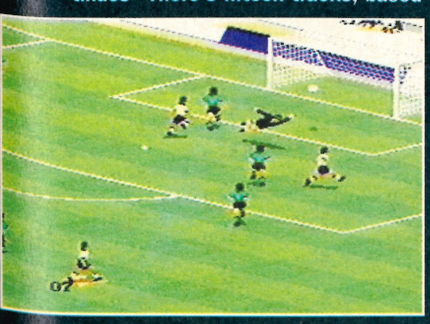
■ *New stars are being recruited to the line-up all the time. The latest is Orlando Magic basketball star Shaquille O'Neal who has earned a huge sum of money by allowing his name to be used.*



▲ *The St. Louis Cardinals settle down for a quick play in between training sessions.*

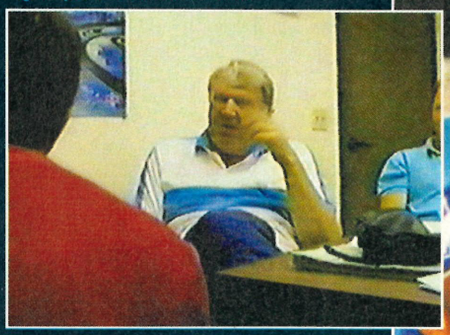
who has worked from scratch, developing a course engine and drawing on the knowledge of top course designers and stars of the sport for the most true-to-life video-game version." PGA Golf Tour release is planned for April/May 94.

In true EA Sports-style, one of the most exciting and flamboyant stars of the sport, Mario Andretti, is to endorse a motor racing game which embraces Formula 1, Stock-cars, Indy 500 and a hybrid of the sport, massive in the States, called 'Sprint'. Over to Mr. Orr to describe EA Sport's first motor sports simulation: "Andretti offers his expertise throughout the course of the simulation and the player has a choice of motor sports which present a vast range of driving challenges" he continues "There's fifteen tracks, based



▲ *The stunning success of FIFA Soccer has taken everybody by storm worldwide.*

▼ *Many in-depth discussions take place during the production of a new title.*

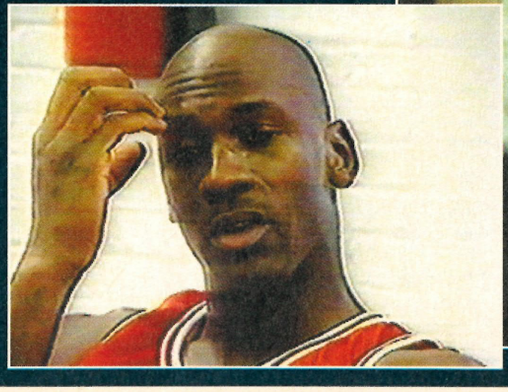


on real track topography and, by popular demand, a split-screen two player option as well as the choice of simulation-style in-cockpit view or coin-op-typical kind of external rear-view racing.

Andretti gives advice and commentary throughout each style of race and in the pits there's a full car design suite." Mario Andretti release date is pitched around March/April. It sounds good.

Inevitably, EA Sports is back in sweat-socks, kneelength baggies and vest to take basketball a few steps further on. Targeted for the summer EA Sports has acquired the licence for the awesome giant of the sport, Shaq O'Neal. "At a shade over seven feet, Shaq is following in the steps of Michael Jordan, who starred in EA Sports spectacular simulation. Shaq's style is, not surprisingly, intimidating and in yer face (providing your over 6.5 that is). Scott gleefully described his first meeting with this sporting giant for me "Shaq was keen to put his stamp on

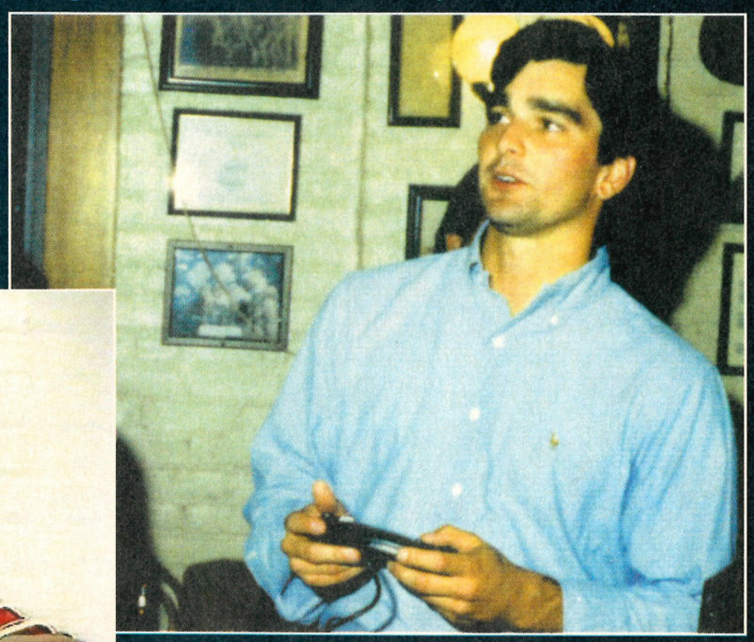
▼ *Micheal Jordan frets over the lack of a betting option in his basketball game. Allegedly.*



▼ *Everybody wants to play on the Mega Drive no matter what team they're from.*

the game and he has kept in regular contact during the project to see how things are progressing."

EA Sports has made sports simulation its own with a winning formula of realistic simulation and action. The top stars in sport are looking toward this arena of entertainment as not only a lucrative and worthwhile licence to get involved with but an excellent medium in spreading the popularity of their sport. The likes of Andretti, Madden, and Shaq O'Neal are genuinely interested in the projects. This shows, every title is a chart-buster.



▲ *Trevor Wilson of the San Francisco Giants takes time out to play a game.*

MEGA

EA Sporting Tributes!

POST YOUR ENTRY NOW

EA SPORTS
ELECTRONIC ARTS

Have we got something for all you sportsters out there. With the winter blues fading away, and warmer times just around the corner, everyone will be preparing for a summer of sport. no doubt you'll be wanting to look your best. Well, this is the competition for you.

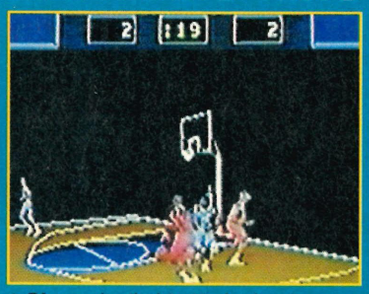
But don't panic if you are soley a console competitor, because the prizes have just arrived care of the finest sports sim producers in the world. Electronic Arts have been in the business for quite some time, long enough for them to prove themselves one of the best.

With titles such as FIFA Soccer and all the Madden series, they are now cashing in on the basketball band wagon. Electronic Arts are a force to be reckoned with. Every detail of the game is programmed in giving you a top quality sports simulation that can't be beaten.

We at Mega Action know that you lot need to chill when you're playing all those sports games. So to keep your cool during the game you must look cool.

The prizes. Straight from Electronic Arts locker room, we can proudly offer some amazing, very limited edition sportswear for you lucky people. First off we have three 'ready to wear' official EA Baseball jackets to give away. If that wasn't enough (probably not for you lot!) there are five England Squad tops to be handed out. But these aren't just your ordinary top, oh no, they're replicas of the strip that the England Squad will be (Erm... Glen, I don't think we actually qualified – Ian) wearing for the World Cup.

To win any of this exclusive EA stuff, just answer these three simple questions and send your form right back to us.



▲ *EA are using the latest technology to produce 3D graphics for their next basketball sim.*

▲ *Fifa Soccer has now established itself as the best console footy game to date.*

Rules:

The winner will be the first person pulled from a large sack with all the questions answered correctly. The first three winners will receive a baseball jacket, the next five an England team shirt each. The Editor's decision is final and no amount of hard cash will swing his favour in any way. Employees of Electronic Arts and even Europress are forbidden to enter the competition and that is the end of that.

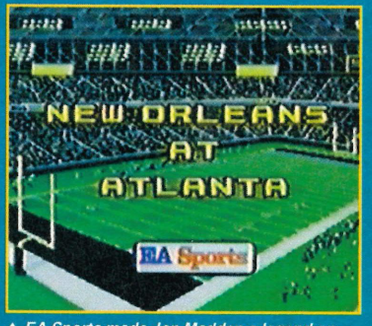
The questions:

1). What was EA's christmas sell out game?
a) FIFA Swimming
b) FIFA Soccer
c) FIFA Snooker

2). The EA Madden series of games simulates which sport?
a). Canadian hockey
b). Danish tiddlywinks
c). American football

3). What is Skitchin'?
a). Hitching a ride on roller blades
b). Knitting while skiing
c). Sketching an itch (What?)

▲ *More basketball mayhem as the NBA teams meet for one massive Showdown.*



▲ *EA Sports made Jon Madden a legend on the console for their gridiron reditions.*

EA Sports compo

My answers are :

1 .....

2 .....

3 .....

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

Post code:

Age: ..... **Tel:** .....

Send your entries by 22.4.94 to:

MEGA ACTION

EA Sports Compo, Mega Action, Europa House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield, SK10 4NP.

☐ *I do not wish to receive promotional material from other companies*

▲ *Dracula Unleashed: It's full motion video time and there's a lot at stake (geddit!).*

▲ *Cliffhanger: Is this what the Mega CD was made for? We think not. Decide for yourself.*

▲ *Mega Race: A Mega CD mega-preview of Mega Race! Is it as hot as it looks?*

cd section

Welcome to Mega Action's Mega CD section. Here you'll find the very latest in Compact Disc action for you to get to grips with including all the new releases and hot previews. Simply turn the page to find out everything you need to know about Double Switch, Cliffhanger, Bill Walsh's College Football, Mega Race and more.

IMPORT

PUBLISHER
Digital Pictures
RELEASE DATE
March
PRICE
£44.99

DOUBLE S

FMV, that's Full Motion Video reaches a new height in CD portrayal yet sadly a new low in plot and acting.

It seems that these high-budget games are very much in vogue at the moment with Mystery Mansion, Ground Zero and Mad Dog McCree kicking around. What makes these games so attractive? Well it's the FMV that's what. People are suckers for anything labelled 'live action interactive'.

With Ground Zero, and to a certain extent Night Trap, the whole thing paid off with the sheer OTT presentation and good gaming speed being the stronger points. It would appear, however, that we've hit a cross-roads in the whole genre of CD games.

There are plenty of games to judge newcomers against now. Scores are going to be more realistic as the format snowballs.

Francis Ford Coppola was approached as a possible director or 'adviser' to Double Switch though rumour has it he wasn't as enthusiastic as expected. Double Switch became the work of Mary Lambert who's claim to fame was directing Steven King's Pet Sematory.

Double Swich has the same gaming perspective as the afore-mentioned games with all the characters talking to you like you were standing next to them. All conversations are rhetorical so don't embarass yourself by trying to answer back.

This must have taken the scriptwriters some time to accomplish and to a certain degree it pays off, though you still feel hard done by as it leaves a lot of questions unanswered and you cannot help but feel that it is somewhat out of your hands. The plot is simple enough and involves the simple protection of innocent people very much like the predecessor Night Trap.

TIP
Take the most comfortable control set up for your needs. The improved speed between room selection and trap manipulation pays off.

The baddies don't seem to harm anyone more give each and every character a fright by sneaking up behind them. The object is also to discover the treasure which is hidden somewhere deep in the building. Eddie of course would like to see you find it, he has designs on Alex and plans, no doubt, to sail off into the sunset.

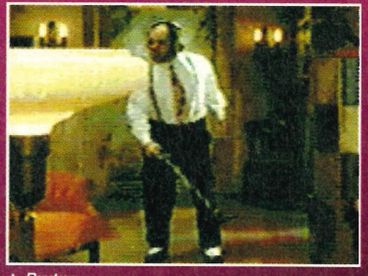
▲ *Yeah! Take that you, you, imposter! Watch with glee as the fireplace opens up for buisness.*

▲ *The symbols on the floor are an indication of when to spring the trap.*

▲ *Bye bye! There's no escape once you get the timing right which is a pretty good thing.*

CRIME WATCH - A QUICK GUIDE TO THOSE IN DANGER

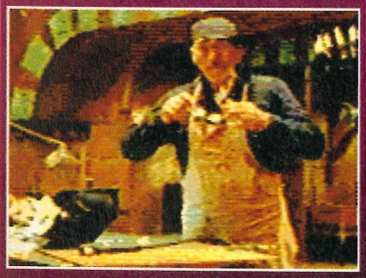
▲ *Alex*
Eddie fancies her though I'm not sure why. She specialises in obliviously walking straight into danger. Then screaming her head off.



▲ *Brutus*
Ex Mob and just out of prison, a rather dubious tenant to have. You can rely on him to be stupid and in need of supervision. Great.

▲ *Jeff*
Jeff is in a band. Not something to be that proud of, especially when the name happens to be Scream. Still, the girlies like him.

▲ *Eddie*
Eddie is the Landlord and the main character of the game. Free him and make his day. Oh, look after Alex, he fancies her in a big way.



▲ *Lyle*
Lyle is the handyman and looks a bit dodgy to me. Eddie urges you to capture him whenever you can so maybe that's sound advice.

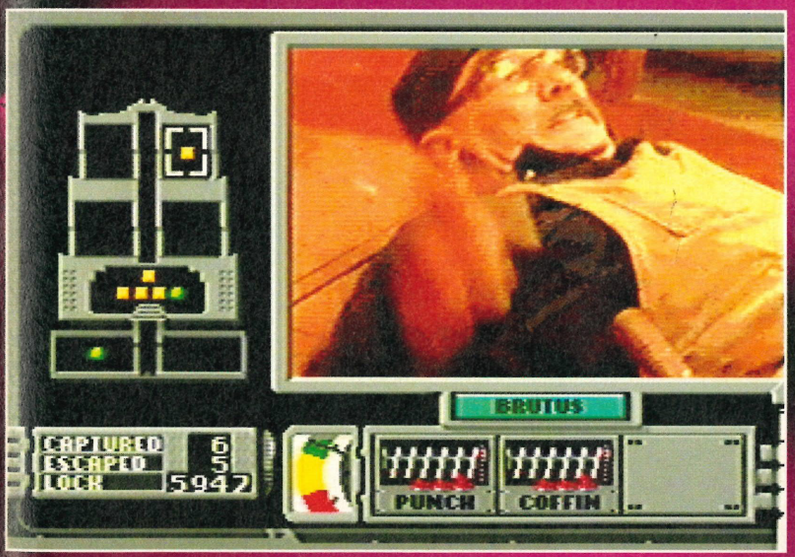
▲ *Elizabeth*
Now just hang on a minute... it's not, it is! It's ex pop star Debbie Harry out to prove she can act! She can't,but protect her anyway.

▲ *Laura*
Another student and more trouble. Sporting a constant attitude she studies architecture and getting into nasty situations.

▲ *Phoebe*
Phoebe is a college student so probably behind in the rent. She studies archaeology and seems to be very outspoken.

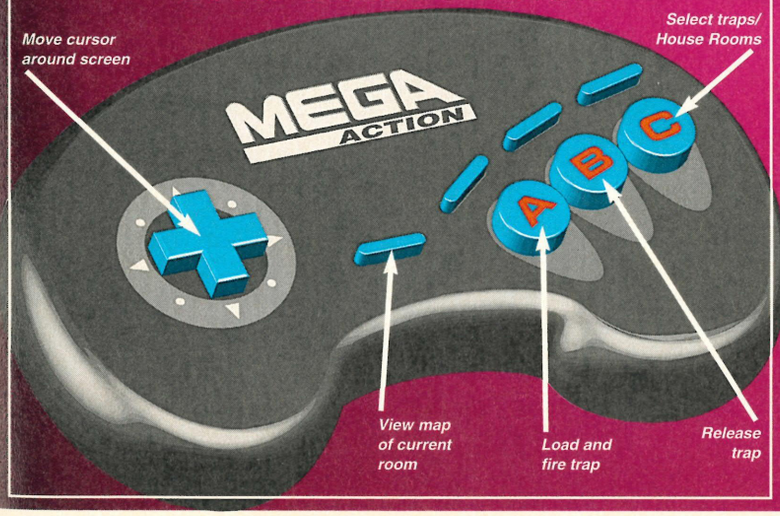
SWITCH

▲ That's Debbie Harry you know. Used to be a singer, now she acts, just. Shame she has to make her Sega FMV debut on something as dodgy as this wouldn't you say?



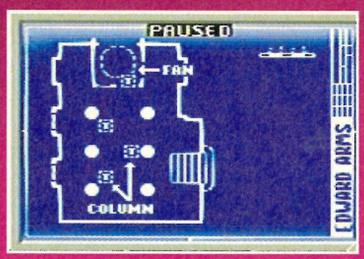
▲ This is the evil janitor who wanders the mansion constantly trying to sabatage any progress you manage to make. Trap him whenever you can or Eddie will tell you off.

DIGIT MANIPULATION



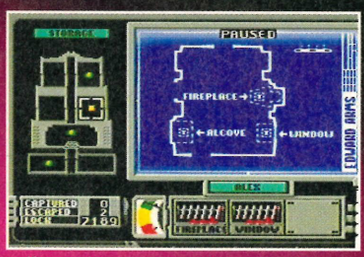
▼ This is the trap system that Eddie has installed . Nice eh?

▲ All the time baddies are trying to disconnect the power supply to Eddie's little room. Careful they don't manage to succeed though.



▲ By pressing pause you can view the bluprints of the current room. This is handy if you're not quite sure where the traps are.

▲ If you screw up too many times then the little spoilt brat disconnects you from the system. Nice guy. Remind me to steal his girl.

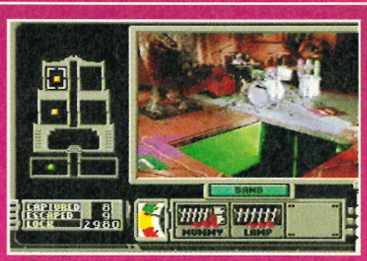


▲ If you miss an enemy with one trap then there's a chance that another trap can be used instead.

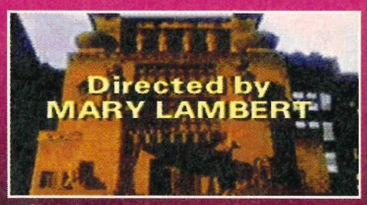
TRAPPER JOHN

Eddie is the lead character and has been locked in the Basement. he owns the whole building called Edward Arms and spent some time converting it into choice apartments. There is one drawback to the house and that, like many other properties in a built-up area, is location. It would appear the house is in the worst residential area possible and residents are under constant threat from marauding thieves, attackers and assorted other nasties.

Being a conscientious landlord Eddie has designed and installed a series of traps which have been designed to capture the evil house guests and dispose of them. Only in America eh? Your task is to free Eddie by discovering the combinations to the locks trapping him in the basement, save or protect all residents from harm and get to cuddle in a special way with Alex.



▲ The floor opens up and yet another nasty person hits the depths. Yippee!



▲ She's famous you know. Ask her.

Take a Pearl and Dean advert for the local swimming baths and cross it with a choice episode of Doctor Who and you have an idea of the plot and character performances that are in this game. The novelty of FMV is wearing off now, it's definitely time for the cast to start attending some sort of acting school. At £45 it's twice as much as any video release so I expect a bit of emotion and direction. Double switch is fast and a bit addictive but that's it. My advice is wait for a sequel. Triple or quadruple switch perhaps..... ■ **STEVE**

MEGA

SOUND	
GRAPHICS	
ADDICTIVENESS	
PLAYABILITY	
OVERALL	**70%**

OFFICIAL

PUBLISHER
Sony
RELEASE DATE
March
PRICE
£44.99

CLIFFHAN

Rocky hangs up his gloves in an attempt to hang on for dear life high in the Rockies. He might as well have fallen off.

Everyone must have heard of the film Cliffhanger. The all-action adventure movie takes place in the snow capped regions of the Rockies. Sylvester Stallone plays the mountain rescue ace, Gabe Walker. Well now's your chance to step into his snow boots and risk your life on the ice.

For all of you out there who know nothing about the film, here's the story so far... A posse of fugitives under the command of Qualen, a power crazed madman, have plotted the greatest heist of all time. They plan to hijack a plane in mid flight and steal three metal cases, containing $100 million in all.

TIP

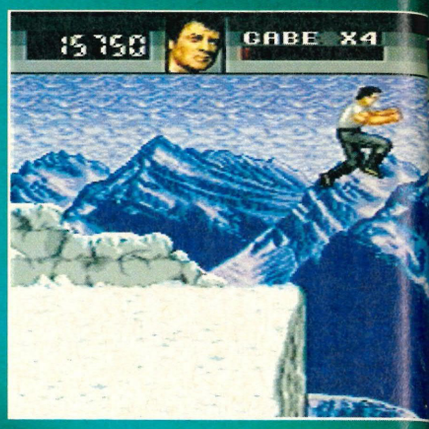
When climbing up the rocky cliff face, take it slow otherwise you don't have a chance to recover after being shot by a sniper.

They extract the three cases from the plane and start to pull into them into their own plane via a long piece of cable. Now this is where things start to wrong for Qualen. Due to unforeseen complications disaster strikes! The cable snaps and $100 million falls into the snowy landscape. If that wasn't enough for the bad guys, their plane crashes.

This is where Sly Stallone steps in. The muscle bound hero of all the Rocky films now plays Gabe, a member of a crack mountain rescue team accompanied by his buddy Hal. On reaching the plane you're held hostage by Qualen. He decides you two can help find the missing money. You manage to escape but must locate the money to pay the ransom off to Qualen for your friend, Hal.

▲ *Watch the guy with the knives, he's the most dangerous out of these two attackers.*

This is where the film and the game become separated slightly. The film takes you on an action packed adventure while the game drops down a couple of notches and becomes a fairly ordinary game.



There are a few differences which separate the two. The most noticeable is the fact that the film has no snowboarding sequences in it but the game has two rather large levels which are 100% snowboarding!

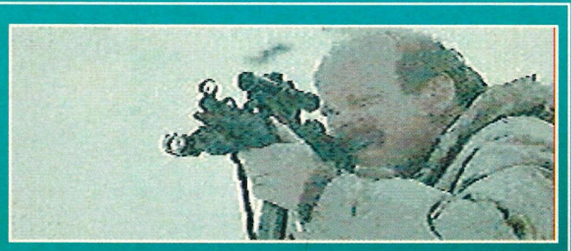
Converting blockbuster films into half decent games does seem to be a problem within the industry. The snowboarding section is pretty good fun but doesn't relate to the film.

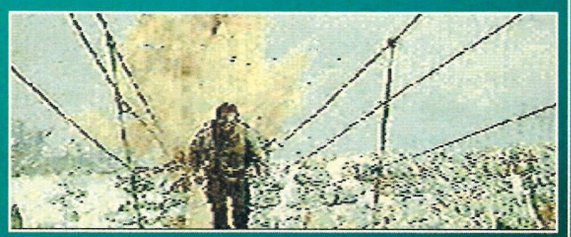
Anyway, back to the CD. The intro runs for ages, so if you're considering buying the game, don't bother hiring the video out as the intro shows most of it. After watching the film footage you're left expecting a totally amazing game with no glitches and quality graphics. Well as for the

▲ *Personally I would have preferred to try the nursery run without the rocks in the snow.*

THE FILM CLIFFHANGER

If you haven't yet seen the film, the digitised intro on the CD fills you in on the whole story. First you watch the 100 million dollars being neatly stacked in to their metallic cases. From there the cash is then airbourne to its next location. This is where the hijackers move in. During mid flight they attempt the hiest of the century. But it doesn't all go according to plan. As they are transfering the money between the two planes, disaster strikes as the money plummets to the ground. Then they crash land. Enter Stallone, the mountain rescue member who's caught up in the race against the elements for the dosh. It's high altitude action all the way, so tighten those safety straps!





■ The camera never lies? The latest technology was used to superimpose Sly onto many of the mountains after filming.

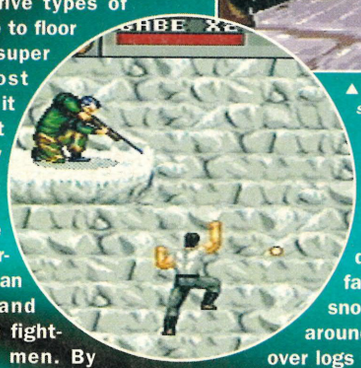
GER

◀ *Take a running jump over those extremely deep chasms if you fancy carring on.*

graphics, they look really 'nice' but you expect something a little more on a CD format.

On the first level Gabe soon runs into trouble on the icy ledges. It's a straight beat 'em up, scrolling right to left fighting off Qualen's men. oh yes, you start off unarmed.

This isn't such a big problem as there're plenty of damaging moves you can perform. There are four different types of punches and five types of kicks you can use to floor the enemy. The super kick is the most effective, but use it sparingly as it drains your energy levels by a sizeable amount.



The moves are fairly simple to perform and things can get a bit easy and predictable when fighting off Qualen's men. By continually pressing the B button, you alternate between high and low kicks and just stand there while they attack you. Easy.

This process works even when your attackers are brandishing knives. There's only one guy to really watch out for. He launches himself at you, with his knives draw. Don't panic though, a simple side step followed by a spinning back kick sorts him out. Grab any knives along the way to even out the odds a little.

Make it through to the end of that section and you come across a small campfire, which Gabe automatically walks over to and warms himself. This warming effect slowly restores your lost energy, so you're ready to face the next task.

If you're scared of heights, then stop reading. To advance further you must scale the vertical rock face in front of you. Climbing is slow and tedious, and you meet several strategically placed snipers. These aggressive blokes don't want your autograph.

◀ *Oh no! I've just come a cropper on one of those rocks. That's game over for me.*

▼ *Make it safely past the snipers on the vertical cliff climb and then locate the campfire to restore any energy lost during the climb.*

▲ *The tunnel represents the start of the second section to the snow boarding level. Well tricky.*

After risking your life climbing all the way up the cliff wall you must now get down the mountain as fast as possible on your snow board. By swerving around rocks and jumping over logs find the fastest route down the slope otherwise you'll become part of the avalanche that's right behind you.

Keep an eye on the avalanche meter tracking the snarling snow behind you. This section is more fun than the first 'punch and walk' sequence, but I think it's just a bit too difficult.

Right, that's the first case of money located. Just find the other two and you can ransom your buddy. No problem. More fighting sequences await you as you continue through the wooded mountain pass. The blizzards force you to find shelter, so you must head for Douglas Cabin. The only problem being that the route to the cabin is a vertical climb. Hold on tight if you ever want to see Jessie, your girlfriend, again.

Your rope climbing skills are again put to good use when travelling over deep chasms in search of the third case. Once that is located you must snowboard your way to safety, keeping an eye on the avalanche meter.

▲ *The avalanche finally caught up with me here. Send out the St. Bernard dogs.*

After all your dangerous escapades across the snowy landscape in search of the cold cash with the full intention of handing the dosh over the fugitives' worst nigthmare comes true. The cases brake open! $100 million floats off in the freezing winds.

Now Qualen is not too pleased about this and won't rest until you're dead. So it's one on one for the final battle, just you and Qualen in a battle until the death.

▲ *Sing "Ging-gang-gooly-gooly-gooly-ging-gang-goo, ging-gang-goo" Get them marsh mellows roastin'.*

If you're thinking about adding this to your CD collection then I would strongly advise you to watch a demo first. Don't get too hung up on the digitised film that plays during the intro sequences, even that will get boring after a while. Watch the film by all means, but hang on to your money where the CD is concerned.

The film is full of great action packed sequences and stunning stuns, but the programmers seemed to have failed in giving the game the same punch. It looks good and plays reasonably well but there could be alot more here. As with most of the CD titles released nowadays, the extensive film footage is great to watch but seems to overpower the gameplay. Without the film clips this would look and play like any ordinary cartridge game. Not the best use of a film conversion and not the greatest CD title to appear. ■ **GLEN**

MEGA

SOUND

GRAPHICS

ADDICTIVENESS

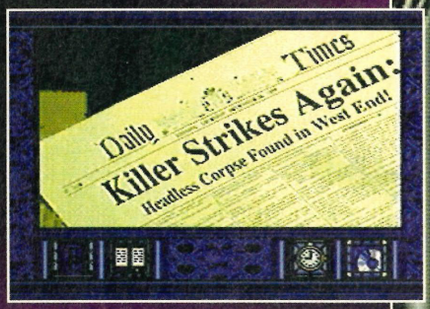
PLAYABILITY

OVERALL 72%

OFFICIAL

PUBLISHER
Sega
RELEASE DATE
Out Now
PRICE
£44.99

DRACULA



▲ It's all over the papers. The killer has struck yet again, draining the blood from the victim.

▲ The inventory can be easily accessed by the user-friendly icons at the base of the screen.

■ Drac's back and this time it's nothing to do with the film of last year. This time Full-motion video takes over!

Drac has been big business since Francis Coppola's version hit the movie screens last year. This country went vampire crazy as Bram Stoker's classic was brought to life once again.

Psygnosis tied up the licence for the film conversion and to be honest it never really came up to scratch. Dracula Unleashed has no connection with the film whatsoever. It's approach is completely different in that it uses complete full-motion video to convey all the action.

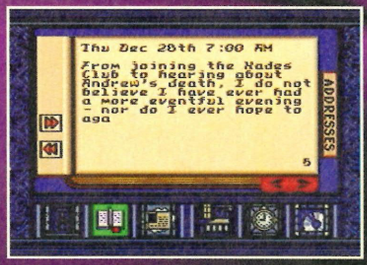
Ah-hah! Good you might think! Ground Zero Texas was a triumph of technology pushing the Mega CD to its limits. If Dracula Unleashed is only nearly as good then it will be well worth splashing out on I hear you scream!

Let's squash that theory straight away. It isn't. It takes all the polish and shine of excellent visual and audio effects and spoils them with an obvious lack of game.

Now if all that sounds a little harsh at this stage then so be it. Let me explain. It all starts off in fine style with a rendition of the Carmina Burana by Carl Orff (that's the music from the Old Spice advert that is!). After the spooky novelty value wears thin, touching a button on your joypad will get you into the game proper.

▲ The newspaper seller chats to you and tells you all the latest from the streets.

▲ The Saucy Jack tavern is an essential place to pick up the latest gossip from.



▲ The journal is updated each time you click on the pen icon. This is vital to the game.

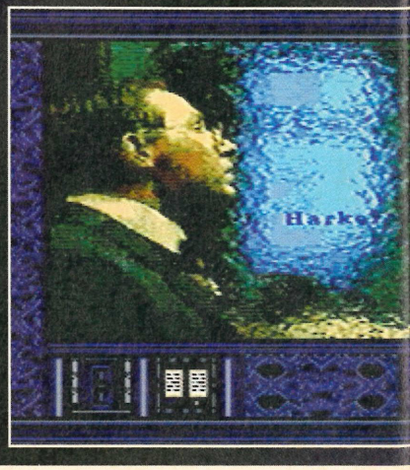
TIP
Keep your own hand-written notes of places you must visit if they are closed the first time around. Forget at your peril as you could lose!

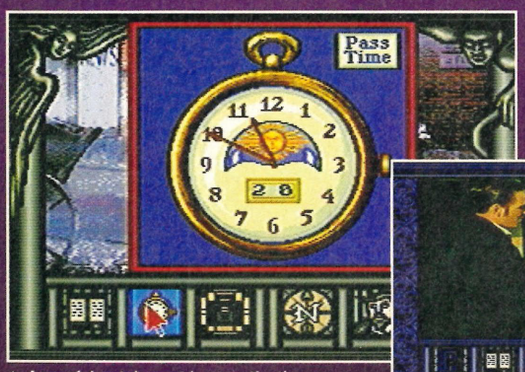
It soon becomes apparent that this is similar to Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective in the way that it handles things. You take control of our young American hero in Victorian Britain who is over here doing a little research. Unfortunately (well I suppose it's quite fortunate in a way or there would be no storyline!) a series of brutal murders begins and several close friends of his are butchered and mysteriously left with no blood!

Sounds like the work of Dracula to me, but I don't like to give too much away! From the intro onwards you're treated to movie style presentation with a host of actors and locations being used to their full potential.

It is these actors that help to make the game funny. That may be a

▼ Harker's butler informs you that his master is not in at the present and you must return.





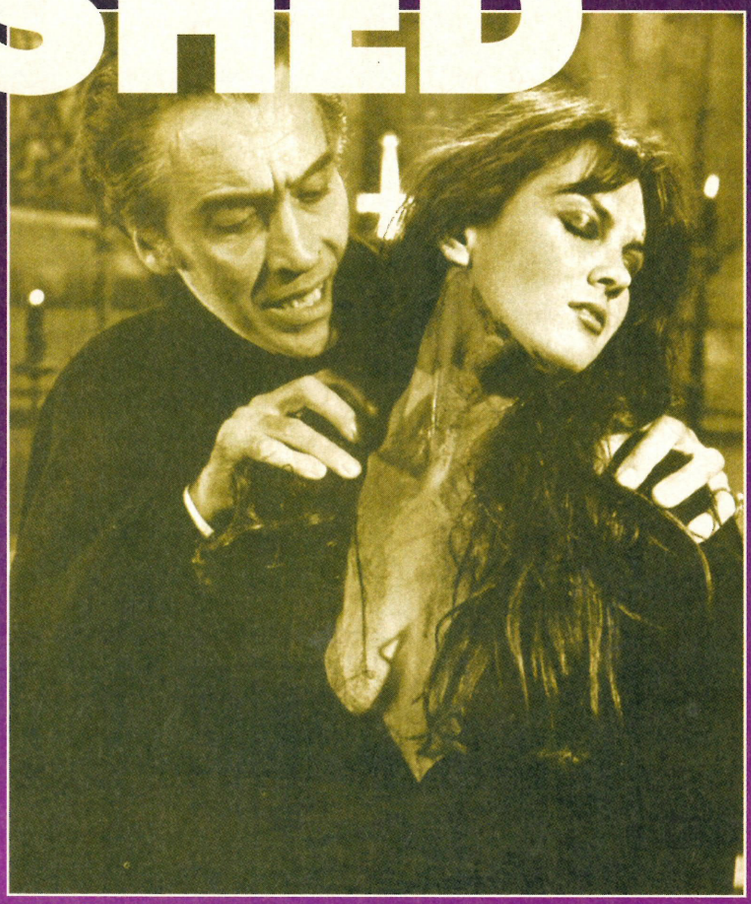
▲ A careful watch must kept on the time so that you don't arrive too late anywhere.

▼ The bookshop contains many strange secrets.

▲ Jonathan Harker's wife seems upset by the news that you bring of another death.

■ Bram Stoker's orginal Dracula character had a moustache!

UNLEASHED



▼ Clicking on the doors will allow you to enter the building's interior.

▼ The map will give you some indication of how long a journey will take across London.

strange word to use but some of the accents have to be experienced to be believed. At some point it must have seemed like a good idea to get a load of Americans into impersonate loveable cockneys! Now this is all well and good if the people employed are good at impressions, but tragically in many cases in Dracula Unleashed, this is simply not true.

The carriage drivers, the newspaper sellers and some others all have accents ranging from Pakistani, Irish, American to Welsh in their efforts to sound like Dirty Den!

The particularly bad ones seem quite adept at flicking through more than one in a sentence! It's all very amusing but after you've had your friends in stitches it also becomes tedious. Parts of it can be switched off but for a lot of the time the speech is necessary to progressing in the game.

Controlling the game is simply a matter of moving the pointer over either the still picture and clicking where you wish to go, or by using the icons found at the base of the screen. These include Enter/Exit, Journal, Map, Time and Options.

The Journal option is perhaps the most interesting of these. Each event can be logged into it to save constantly scribbling notes or retrieving things from your memory.

Clicking on pen will provide a description of what's just happened being read out to you as you enter it all in writing. This section of the game is vitally important as it allows you to enter new addresses to travel to in your carriage. When you wish to travel to a new location it's just a case of entering the cab outside and selecting a location from within the pages of your journal. If it isn't there then you can't make the journey. So forget to enter vital information at your peril!

This journal entering section is the only main interaction there is. The rest of the time you just click away on the few icons available to get anywhere. It's easy to become absorbed in what's happening around you as you watch events unfold. Still, there isn't that much to actually do, pretty as everything is.

▲ Check out the awful cockney accents of the cab drivers. They almost make it worth buying.

Things tend to happen regardless of what you do and it's very possible to come up against a dead end if you get your timing wrong (ie, turning up at the pub out of hours reveals it to be closed, thus denying access to vital clues unless you wait around!).

The atmosphere generated is good but I'm not too sure that it either makes for a long-term challenge or provides many hours of fun for everyone. Perhaps if there was a little more to do then the whole excercise would have been worthwhile!

▲ This strange character can be met at the Hades Club. Watch your back though as he's dangerous.

▲ By collecting telegrams you can glean extra information. These will normally e delivered by hand but you can always pop in at the office too.

As you can guess by now, I'm not overly fond of this game. This is the second Vampire 'em-up in a couple of months and neither has persuaded me to smile! I saw this on the PC a few months back and this version is extremely similar (right down to the crazy accents). It's a good-looking game but the interaction and playability just wasn't there for me. It doesn't come into the same league as some of the CD stuff being released at the moment. Think seriously before purchasing as you may be throwing cash away! ■ **PAUL**

MEGA

SOUND

GRAPHICS

ADDICTIVENESS

PLAYABILITY

OVERALL

74%

OFFICIAL

PUBLISHER
EA Sports
RELEASE DATE
March
PRICE
£39.99

BILL WALS COLLEGE FOOTBALL

▲ *The man himself, Bill Walsh, gives his views on the forthcoming game from the press box.*

■ Hero to millions, Bill Walsh has now been immortalised on his own CD, courtesy of EA Sports of course.

If you're sat there thinking that this is just a straight conversion from cart to CD you would be right. The gameplay doesn't really seem to have altered much and the college teams have remained the same. So why have EA Sports gone to all the trouble of releasing something identical to their cart? Well it isn't entirely identical. Once the CD has loaded up you can access the Walsh Video before you take to the pitch.

There are four main categories to select from first. Each then splits up as Bill appears, as if by magic, to give you an in depth report on that subject. The four main headings are College Football, Game Day, Pro vs. College and finally College Life.

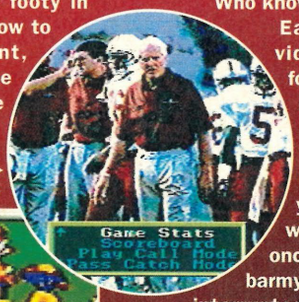
The first is split into seven sections, each which explains roughly the basics of college football. Bill covers the geographical regions of the US, i.e. the importance of weather conditions. He also explains how to prepare for regular and bowl games (major games). How players are recruited by scouts and modern trends in football.

TIP

When playing against a mate, choose your play using the bluff mode, so they don't know which play you've actually selected.

Game Day is probably the most informative selection of clips. Here Bill goes into detail about the strategies you should be considering for each quarter, as well as half time and pregame talks.

Bill explains the differences between Pro vs. College footy in this section. He tells us how to deal with management, coaches and even those horrendous, unspeakable media guys.

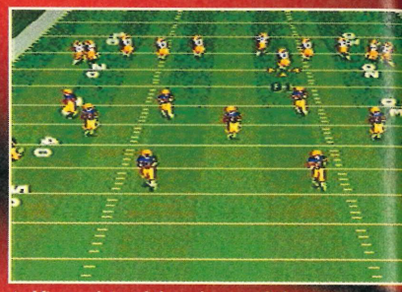


Bill even puts an appearance in on the touch line during play. ▶

Finally Bill gives us a run down on College Life. Basically choose the right college or university for all round academic skills, but also consider what they have to offer on the sports front. Make sure you get involved with any sporting groups and don't just vegetate. Lastly, enjoy college life but not too much, remember your goal and your priorities. Don't celebrate too much and I quote, "That way you'll be able to compete with a clear mind" Is Bill inferring here that college life is scattered with alcohol and drugs? Who knows.

Each of Bill's little video clips can last for one to three minutes. They are brief but informative. Whatever you do, don't sit in front of your television and watch them all at once, it will drive you barmy. Your sleep will be interrupted by visions of Bill mumbling advice at you. Anyway on to the actual game.

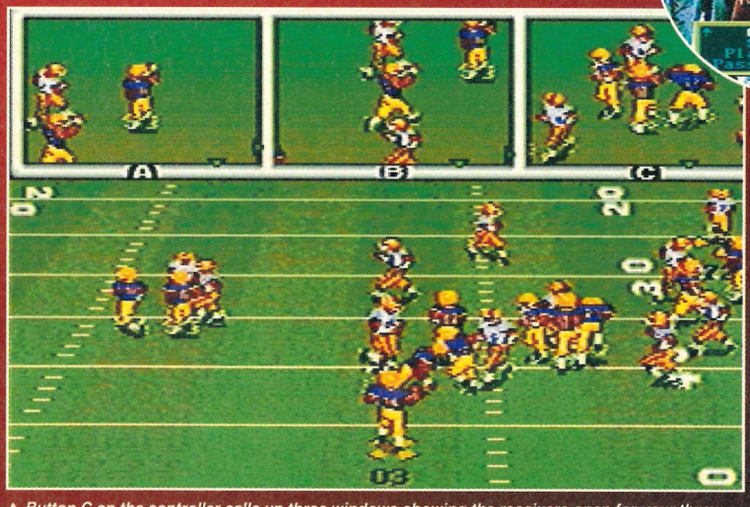
If you have Bill Walsh on cart then stop reading, it's the same from here on in. If not, well read on. All the teams are from Colleges across the US (if you haven't already guessed). The rules do differ slightly from pro football, but don't let it worry you too much.



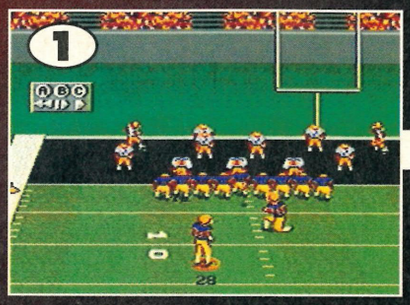
▲ *After each touchdown is scored, the teams leg it back to their own end zone to carry on.*

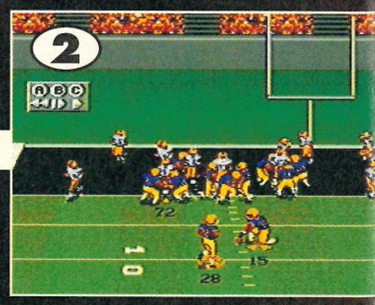
Because we have never heard of any of these teams and we're unsure about their performance, check the Walsh Report for the best advice in the business on each of the teams strengths and weaknesses. Go to the Team Match-up screen for a numerical comparison of the two teams selected. The list compares nine of the teams most important features. The higher the rating, (all of which are marked out of 100) the stronger the team are in that area. Simple enough stuff.

EA have kept to the same high standard of reproducing sports sims that really copy the game in question. Here every play from the field

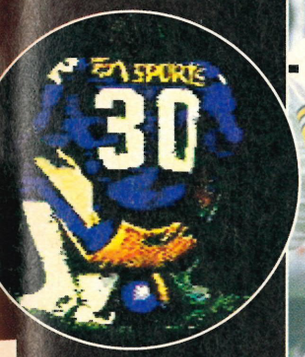


▲ *Button C on the controller calls up three windows showing the receivers open for your throw.*

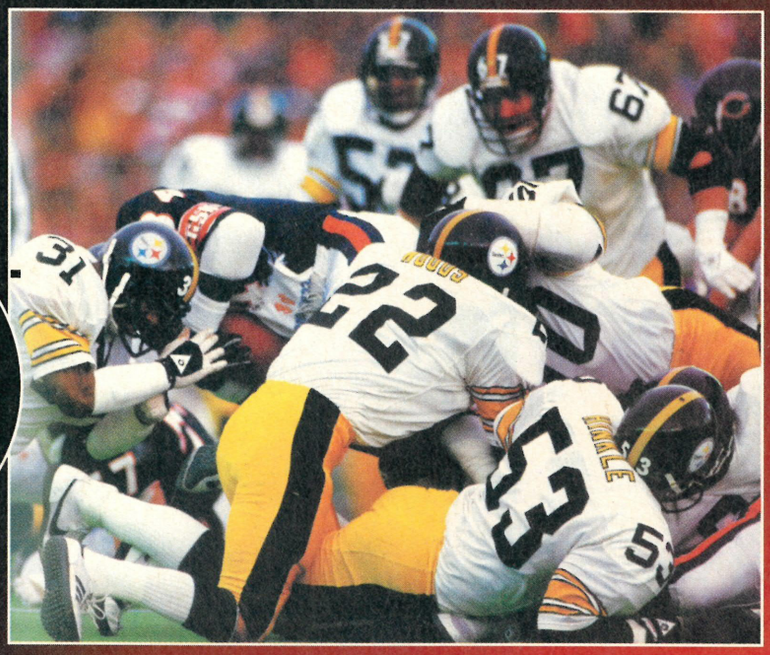


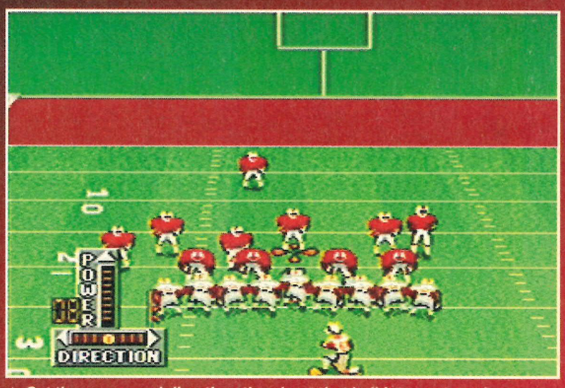


■ Walter Payton who played No.34 for Chicago Bears, broke so many records that when he retired, the Bears retired his number as a mark of respect.



▲ Even when the CD is loading, EA manage to fit in some advertising.





▲ Set the power and direction, then boot that ball into next week.

Probably the highest paid commentator in the history of American Football. Ron Barr seems to be the full time press box official for all EA sims.

▲ Each play has a small diagram which shows the general moves on that play.

▲ This is the trophy that you will be competing for against all the other college teams.

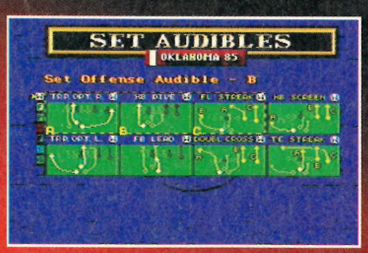
has been carried over and programmed in. Yep that's right, you can choose from all those funny named plays, but don't panic, you'll start to recognise some in time. When choosing a play, take a closer look at the diagram that goes with the play name, so you'll know whereabouts your players will run to.

Once you have selected the play you think will gain you the most yardage, your team, lines up. Now at this stage, as quarterback, you must watch the opposing team carefully. If their defensive line up looks as though you may have a problem getting through, you've the option of calling an audible. These are a set of preset moves, worked out before the game begins.

By selecting one of the three audibles the team will automatically change positions and prepare to instigate the preset move. Three audibles can be set for the defensive team and three for your offensive team. Always keep them in mind, as they may just be able to help you out in a tricky situation.

The throws and punts all take a bit of practice, so expect to loose the first few games, but once you've mastered the joypad you'll be controlling College fields right the way across the US. As Bill informs us during his digitised introduction, to win the game you must use your head as well as brute strength. It's also a game of strategy. So don't forget you can outsmart three of your mates by usuing the EA four-way player.

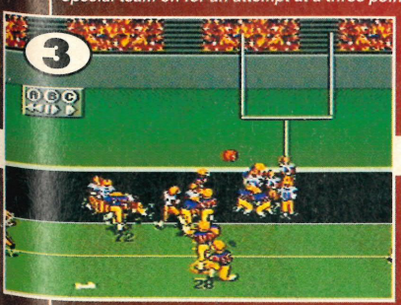
If you've seen any of the EA Sports titles before you'll recognise the game commentator. Yes, it's good old Ron Barr. He returns to take his seat in the press box and fill you in on the latest football scores and table standings. Looks like Bill can't take all the credit for himself, Ron Barr wants in on the CD action. That bloke gets everywhere.

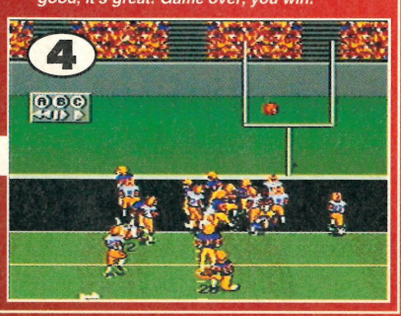


▲ The audibles are set pre-match in case of an emergency call.

FIELD GOAL GLORY!

Here's the plan. It's fourth down and five yards to the endzone. Their defensive team are making the final drive forward very difficult. There's only one point between scores and time is running out. The solution? Call the special team on for an attempt at a three point field goal to win the match. The kicker is in position and the play is called. The quarterback takes the snap and places the ball in position. The opposition are clambering over your team mates, but the kick is made, it's good, it's great! Game over, you win!





As we have seen before, programmers use the CD format to present the game with full motion video sections. There's quite an extensive run of digitised clips of Bill, but apart from that the game hasn't really changed. The original cartridge from EA Sports seemed to have already covered everything. But if you fancy some sound advice from Bill, or if you have no one to talk to you, take a gander at this CD. But if certain people around you already hand out enough advice on life in general, you won't appreciate Bill adding his bit. ■ **GLEN**

MEGA

SOUND

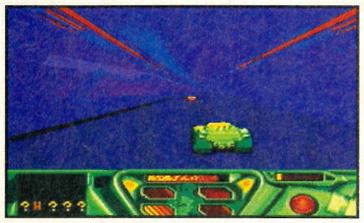
GRAPHICS

ADDICTIVENESS

PLAYABILITY

OVERALL 83%

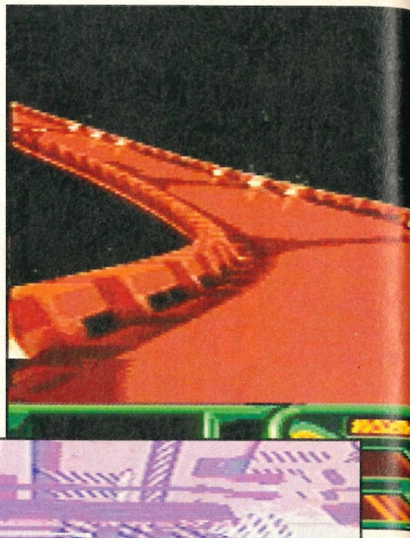
MEGA RACE



▲ *Crashing into the walls is no good for your paintwork or your chances of victory.*

▲ *With the sun in your eyes you only have one thing on your mind – winning!*

▲ *Haring around this futuristic city landscape can be quite perilous at times.*



Screaming around futuristic corners may not sound like the ideal Mega CD game but take a look at this little gem...

With Virtua Racing about to sweep the board as far as car racing goes it may seem to some that there is little point in anyone else looking for success in the race market. Well, for a while at least. Mega Race has been developed for the PC as well as the Mega CD and a quick glance at it is all you need to realise exactly why.

VR relies on combining polygons to make a fast racing environment. Mega Race reverts to the traditional sprite-based car but adds to it some stunning background effects that take the game away from the run-of-the-mill car games that are ten-a-penny on consoles these days.

▲ *There's no way you will catch that vehicle on this stretch of road. Not yet anyway!*

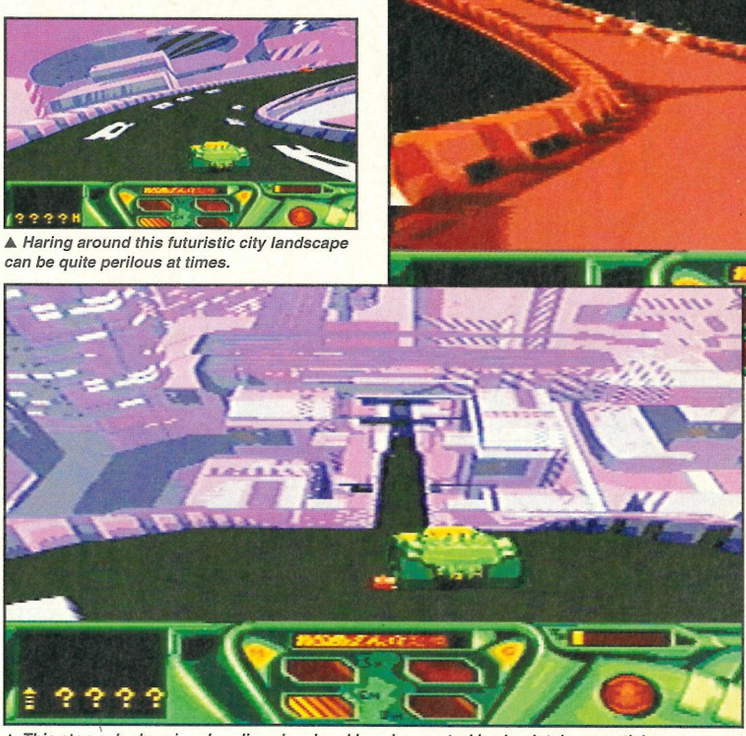
▲ *You approach the corner a little too sharply. It's all about to go horribly wrong.*

▼ *You're going into a spin and will need good, sharp reactions to control this one.*

Software Toolworks took this project on and their PR bloke, James Morris, was positively orgasmic over it when he came to show it to us. "Put that on and ask yourself if it's really a Mega CD game?" he said, proferring the shiny, gold disc.

Yeah right we thought. Anyway, even in this unfinished state some aspects of Mega Race are awesome.

The Mega CD version is still in its very early days but despite this it's pretty easy to see the way development is going. Upon popping the CD in the drive you're greeted by a futuristic vehicle motoring down a weird roadway. The backdrops to this make your jaw nearly fall off your face!



▲ *This stomach-churning drop lies ahead and keeping control is absolutely essential or your car will soon be totally out of control. It is the Mega Race after all.*

▲ *Your opponent is in your sights. Get up close behind him and pull the trigger to obliterate him forever.*

Admittedly graphics never make a game but it's almost too easy to get carried away as your car rises to the top of the steepest hill you've ever seen only to then plummet away down the other side with freaky city graphics rushing past as you go.

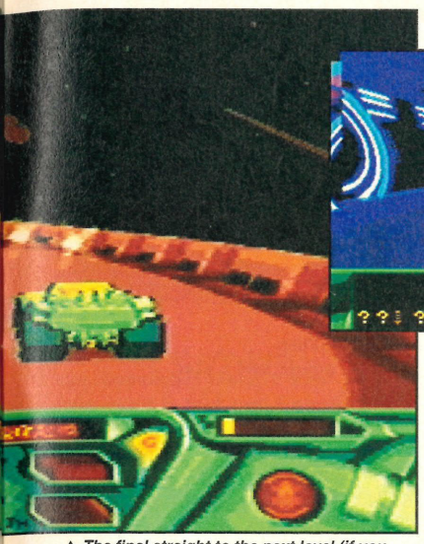
At the moment all we've seen of Mega Race are the racing sections them-

▲ *This terrifying section looks as real as it gets on a Mega CD title.*

▼ *Take a look at that scenery as you whizz by it. Keep your mind on the job though.*

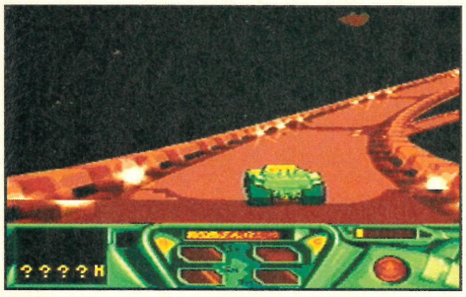
▲ *A winding track is confusing to the eye. Concentrate as hard as possible to stay on the road. Also, take care as your competitors are never too far behind you with guns blazing.*

▲ *A particularly nasty bend lies ahead. Careful use of the brakes is necessary here.*



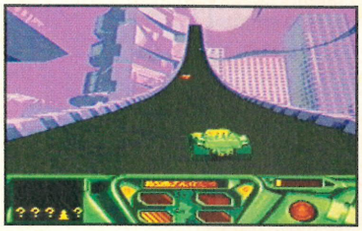
▲ *The final straight to the next level (if you can call it straight!). Here we go!*

▼ *There are no introductory screens ready on the Mega CD but these are impressive enough.*

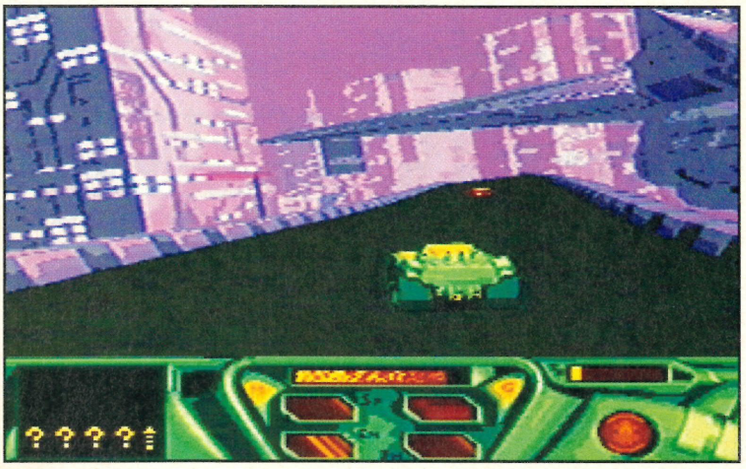


▼ *This tunnel is hazardous to the inexperienced car driver.*

▼ *If this is a steep climb, imagine the drop on the other side of it to come.*



▼ *Once again your arch-enemy is ahead of you. Can you finally close in on him before the end of the race or will he eventually pip you to the post before you can kill him.*



▲ *Another steep slope will slow you down in your bid to become champion.*

selves. By the time the game is completed there'll be a massive array of introductory sequences, including a bizarre Max Headroom style link man that appears before each race. At the beginning of the game he'll also pop up and dosh out some info as to why you're there in the first place.

On the PC version a digitised actor is used to carry these sequences off but due to hardware restrictions this section is currently being altered for Mega CD users. When they're finished (hopefully next month) we'll show the screen shots in the news.

Even though it won't be the same as its full-motion counterpart you can rest assured that Mega Race will still be visually and aurally superb. The introduction itself goes on for ages on PC CD and we are told that it will all be there in the finished Mega CD copy.

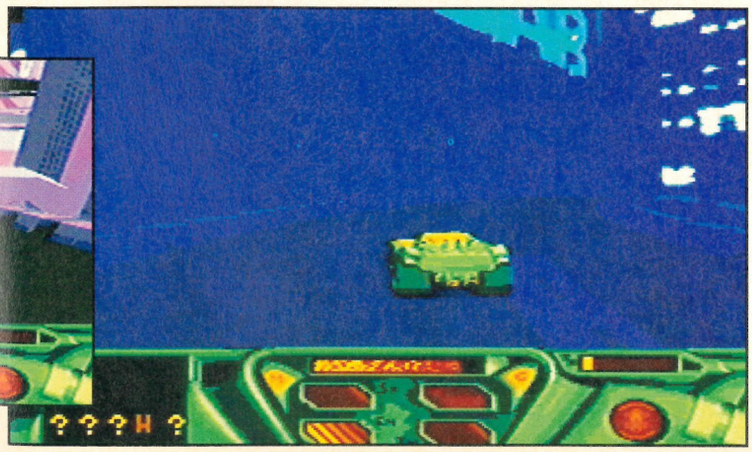
In case you were wondering, the basic gist of the storyline is that you are not driving a real car but one on a Virtual Reality track for thrills. If it was just driving then you may think that things were a bit tedious but in Mega Race the cars all have guns and are a whole lot nastier than in real life. You too, naturally enough, are armed and dangerous. If any cars get in the way then it is perfectly acceptable to blast them to oblivion as they're all after the glittering prizes the winner of the Mega Race receives.

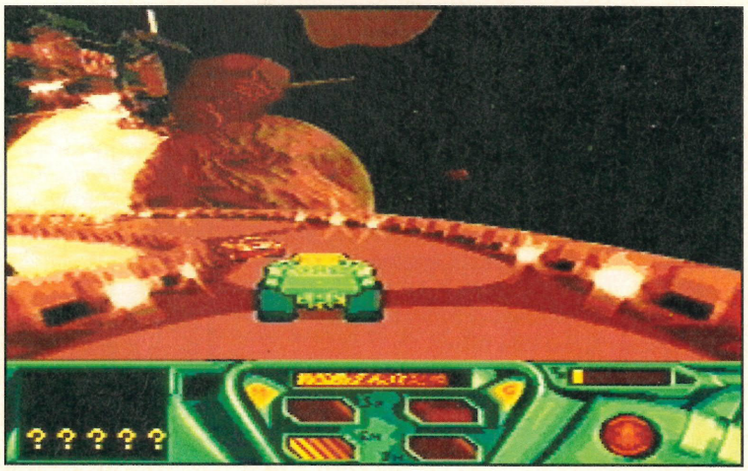
So it's a little strange, we don't care! It was impossible to tell at the stage we played it exactly how the car will handle. Everything is well drawn and moves around but until further on in development we're not sure how it will play. If first impressions are anything to go by then this will eventually turn out to be a winner.

This is the type of game that will help to sell the Mega CD on looks alone. If you see it playing in a shop and were previously undecided on whether to take the plunge and buy one, then this could well just tip the balance and see that 200 odd quid tumble from your wallet.

Still, that isn't going to happen for a few months yet! As for actual release dates and prices well they're still to be confirmed by the guys in the know, but you shouldn't expect it until at least April time, maybe even later. Check out the news each month for updates but we'll have more for you as soon as possible. So will Mega Race lead the next generation of race games? Wait and see.

▼ *The backgrounds whizz by and a lot of work has gone into all the scenery.*





▲ *The asteroids spin around in the background. Keep your eyes on the road.*

▼ *Screaming around the corner you catch sight of another vehicle in the distance.*

MEGA VIEW

It looks good on the PC but doesn't seem to play amazingly well. The Mega CD version looks equally impressive and hopefully with the Mega Drive being more suited to this type of game than big home computers, things may well turn out to be a good deal better in the end. If this is the case then we are in for a cracking little game before summer. We'll have to wait and see what happens. Keep your eyes peeled for a full review as soon as possible. ■ *PAUL*

RELEASE: TBA **PRICE:** £TBA

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MEGA TIPS

MIXED AND CRACKED

Right, I hope you lot appreciate the effort I went to type out all of the Wiz 'n' Liz fruit combinations. It took me ages.

Wiz 'n' Liz

It was some time before I punched in the last letter. So you lot had better enjoy this fully comprehensive list of all the possible fruit combinations. Oh yeah, the list was generously sent in by a Mr. M. Ridings of Sale Moor, Manchester. Your Ross Electronics joypad is on its way.

Here we go...

Apple & Apple : You'll receive a new bonus letter.
Apple & Strawberry : The exit door will be revealed.
Apple & Banana : The shop is now visible.
Apple & Orange : Random fruit bonus.
Apple & Carrot : A whole 5000 points.
Apple & Potato : Timer is frozen.
Apple & Cabbage : Timer is reset at maximum.
Apple & Mango : 75 bonus stars.
Apple & Lemon : 100,000 points!
Apple & Onion : A magic ruby.
Apple & Pear : Morph person.
Apple & Cherry : 150 stars extra.
Apple & Avocado : Optional grassland door.
Apple & Mushroom : Return to normal fruit.

Strawberry & Strawberry : 10 seconds of extra playing time.
Strawberry & Banana : Magic diamond.
Strawberry & Orange : Splatter spell.
Strawberry & Carrot : Double those points boy!
Strawberry & Potato : Why wed wabbits.
Strawberry & Cabbage : Gween wabbits.
Strawberry & Mango : Set a wheelspin.
Strawberry & Lemon : Wow! Freakiness.
Strawberry & Onion : Weather takes a turn for the worse.
Strawberry & Pear : A strange smell indeed.
Strawberry & Cherry : Double stars.
Strawberry & Avocado : Double up the bonus round.
Strawberry & Mushroom : A whole point! and sixty seconds!

Banana & Banana : Lemming mania.
Banana & Orange : Well what do you know. Nothing.
Banana & Carrot : 50 stars.
Banana & Potato : The hint shop is now open.
Banana & Cabbage : Spells are now in sale!
Banana & Mango : Go to templeland.
Banana & Lemon : Fruit now equals bonus time.
Banana & Onion : Get catching.
Banana & Pear : Fruit worth extra points.
Banana & Cherry : How slow?
Banana & Avocado : 45 seconds of extended time.
Banana & Mushroom : A real slow timer.

Orange & Orange : One point.
Orange & Carrot : Blue Wabbits.
Orange & Potato : Big 'orrible snakes.
Orange & Cabbage : Amusing joke – allegedly.
Orange & Mango : Random amount of extra time.
Orange & Lemon : A god given chance.
Orange & Onion : 30 seconds of bonus time.
Orange & Pear : 40 seconds of free time.
Orange & Cherry : Wow lunarland.
Orange & Avocado : 10,000 points sir.
Orange & Mushroom : Terrible taste, no it's tube skiing.

Carrot & Carrot : Sound testing!
Carrot & Potato : Take an extra 20 seconds.
Carrot & Cabbage : Zilch.
Carrot & Mango : What a bunch of bananas.
Carrot & Lemon : 80 stars.
Carrot & Onion : An E additive.
Carrot & Pear : Wabbit invaders.
Carrot & Cherry : 100, 000 points and a star.
Carrot & Avocado : Five stars.
Carrot & Mushroom : Fruit become stars.

Potato & Potato : Treeland this way.
Potato & Cabbage : Game over man!
Potato & Mango : A magic emerald.
Potato & Lemon : What?!?
Potato & Onion : A big fat zero.
Potato & Pear : There's gold in them hills.
Potato & Cherry : Let's go to mineland.
Potato & Avocado : Snowland is over here.
Potato & Mushroom : 250 STARS!

Cabbage & Cabbage : Bash those letters.
Cabbage & Mango : 25, 000 points.
Cabbage & Lemon : All letters are visible.
Cabbage & Onion : Five seconds of extra, valuable time.
Cabbage & Pear : Ooo! Deadland.
Cabbage & Cherry : Blend into windowland.
Cabbage & Avocado : 50, 000 points.
Cab'ge & Mushroom : Wobot wabbits.

Mango & Mango : Double time symbols.
Mango & Lemon : Random amount of extra stars.
Mango & Onion : The dry desertland awaits.
Mango & Pear : 100 stars.
Mango & Cherry : A whole one second of extra time.
Mango & Avocado : What a joke.
Mango & Mushroom : 250, 000 huge points.

Lemon & Lemon : Swap those bonus letters around.
Lemon & Onion : Random amount of points awarded.
Lemon & Pear : Am I seeing double stars?
Lemon & Cherry : A secret message.
Lemon & Avocado : A star.
Lemon & Mushroom : One second and 300 stars.

Onion & Onion : Let the wabbits live!
Onion & Pear : Magic mushrooms, my favourite.
Onion & Cherry : 20, 000 points.
Onion & Avocado : 125 stars extra.
Onion & Mushroom : A juicy cheeseburger.

Pear & Pear : Fruit ceases to spin.
Pear & Cherry : 175 stars for you.
Pear & Avocado : 200 stars.
Pear & Mushroom : 50 seconds of time.

Cherry & Cherry : Bounce around for a bit.
Cherry & Avocado : Increase the number of fruit.
Cherry & Mushroom : Skip past current level.

Avocado & Avocado : Receive all bonus letters.
Avo'do & Mushroom : Extra life.

M'room & Mushroom : The magic of the sapphire.

Because all of you have been incredibly good to us this month we're going to return the compliment. We're going to give you the final game code so you may finish the game with ease. The final code is, wait for it: MGTP GLLS. And here's a special tip. If you collect the Magic Stone, Ruby, Diamond and Emerald all together you can play the bonus round!

WE NEED YOUR TIPS AND CHEATS!

MEGA ACTION is on the lookout for decent tips and cheats! We're always looking out for more letters for this section shortly, so if you need help with a game or have advice for your fellow readers, put pen to paper!
The best tip sent in each month wins an infra-red joypad courtesy of Ross Electronics!
Send your cheats, hints and tips to:

Mega Action Tips and Cheats,
Europress Interactive Ltd,
Europa House,
Adlington Park,
Macclesfield,
Cheshire SK10 4NP.

DR. BARRY DIABLO

Woah! Hold those horses! It's time for another fine selection of your letters. I would attempt to write some kind of witty intro but ever since the golfing accident I've lost my bowel controlling capabilities. But before I go, let me ask you a question. How do you treat a horse with the following symptoms; Splayed hoof, runny nose or a bent tail? Give up? Easy, shoot it. Bye...

Dear Barry,

Having read your expert review of Landstalker in the December issue I was most impressed. So impressed in fact that I rushed out and purchased a copy to play. Needless to say I am now currently having severe trouble. I need assistance. if you could help me by revealing any cheats I will be most grateful. Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Brendan Monks, St. Saviour, Jersey.

BARRY: Why hello distant reader. Trouble with Landstalker eh? In need of cheats are we? Unfortunately for you I cannot help unless you have a Replay cartridge because the game itself doesn't hold any secret cheats that I know of. How careless of the programmers to neglect such a feature to such a great game. If you do require hints on any puzzles then by all means write in.

Dear Barry,

I noticed that not long ago you have printed the complete list of game codes for Flashback. That's quite alright if you've got the game but what about the likes of me? I still haven't completed Another World so I would like some help like a list of the codes or something similar. Please help.

Yours Faithfully,

Ian Maclair, Wales.

BARRY: I don't know. There's just no pleasing some people is there? Never mind, I will help by showing the comprehensive list of all the game codes:–

LEVEL 1: LDKD.
LEVEL 2: HTDC.
LEVEL 3: CLLD.
LEVEL 4: LBKG.
LEVEL 5: XDDG.
LEVEL 6: FXLC.
LEVEL 7: KRFK.
LEVEL 8: KLFB.
LEVEL 9: DDRX.
LEVEL 10: HRTB.
LEVEL 11: BRTD.
LEVEL 12: TFBB.
LEVEL 13: TXHF.
LEVEL 14: CKJL.
LEVEL 15: LFCK.

There, that should keep you going. If it doesn't, well erm..tough.

Dear Barry,

I'm having an enormous amount of fun with my new game, Jungle Strike. I've got quite far into it already. I'm up to the snow fortress now, which I think is reasonable progress. But I would like to know if there's any way of using any pilot I want to at the very beginning of the game. If there is a way please tell me.

Yours Faithfully,

Steven Hewitt, Isle of Wight.

BARRY: Congratulations on your gaming prowess. But I see you're in need of enlightenment with your choice of Co-pilot. There is a way to choose any Co-pilot by entering a special game code and this special game code is: 3NSH3X7NLMS. This brilliant collection of numbers and letters'll cast a magic spell over your future gaming experiences.

Dear Barry,

Although I've been intensively playing this for the last few months I still can't get anywhere. Oh, sorry the game is Populous two. Perhaps you could give me some game passwords to help me reach the final stages? Thanking you in advance.

Yours Faithfully,

Daniel Treasham, Surrey.

BARRY: Hello Daniel. I think I may be of some use to you. If you enter the word 'Humanoid' in the password screen you'll be blessed with a large amount of mana at the beginning of your game. And it doesn't stop there, if you enter 'Experiment' as your pass code you'll find that your god has full experience in all departments. Aren't you lucky!

Dear Barry,

I've been playing EA's Rolo to the Rescue for quite some time now. And I still haven't managed to get safely past the desert in the second stage. Is there some sort of joypad trickery that will allow me to cheat my boots off? Please help.

Yours Faithfully,

S. Clarkson, Derby.

BARRY: Aah. Such a fine game, and a difficult one at that. Especially near the desert which you've quite correctly pointed out. The answer is yes, yes I can help you. If you push Up/Left, A and C on your joypad at the main title screen and press reset whilst holding the joypad combination you'll gain access to a secret options screen. To enter the said options screen press B after the game has reloaded. You'll now be invincible, infinite lives and you'll have access to all of the game map. Brilliant eh?

Dear Barry,

How's it going gringo? Erm... sorry about that, just trying to sound mexican that's all. Yeah, anyway, what I want to ask you is, is it possible to increase the amount of lives or something in Sunset Riders? If you could tell me anything apart from Replay codes I'll be most grateful.

Yours Faithfully,

Mark Rafferty, Brighton.

BARRY: Hi there meester. It seems you have a mighty problem. Maybe with my six-shooter and my cactus needles I could be of some asseestance. Go to the sound testing department and leesten to tune 0E for a while and then return to the main screen to choose your player with button A. Then when the chosen character turns and smiles at you press and hold A, B and C until the game begins. If done correctly you'll have a 100 continues. Now let's go bring some justeece to this miserable town.

Dear Barry,

I'm tiny, toony and now positively looney. Yes those pesky tiny toons have got the better of me. Is there any way you can assist me Barry? I need any kind of clue or cheat. Preferably not of the Replay kind as I don't own one. See you soon.

Yours Faithfully,

Ronnie Kingston, Balham, London.

BARRY: Tiny toon trouble eh? Now let me see if I've got anything to help. Ah ha! Here we go. If you enter this game code with button B from the pad you'll gain access to the entire map: NGQQ WWQW QKWQ QWWQ WGRY. Oh what a clever chap I am.

Dear Barry,

I've recently been slaying my way through Wonderboy in Monsterworld. It's not that I'm stuck in anyway, although help with the final level would be nice, I just can't seem to figure out what you're supposed to do with the charmstone. I've tried what seems nearly everything. There must be some use for it otherwise why would it cost so much? Please tell me if you know the secret behind this expensive gem.

Yours Faithfully,

Christopher Mullins, Kent.

BARRY: Yes I do know but I'm not going to tell you. Oh alright then. When you purchase the mysterious item in Purapil you should take it to the secret shop. What secret shop you might say? Well, the secret shop I refer to is near the entrance to Lilypad at the bottom left of the area. There's a secret door located between two patches of brown bricks, right where the ivy is. If you enter this location you can exchange the charmstone for extra health or extra spell power. Neat tip eh?

Dear Barry,

Before we start I'd just like to point out that I haven't enclosed my name anywhere as I don't want my friends at school to find out that I've sought someone else's help. I need to know all of the passwords to Splatterhouse three. I beg of you to help me in my hour of need.

Yours Faithfully,

A. Nonymous, Oxford (That's what the post mark indicated).

BARRY: Hmm. I'm in two minds whether to answer this letter or not. Fancy being so pathetic as not enclosing your own name in case people recognise you! Still, shall not the judge of all the earth do right? (What on earth is this supposed to mean? – Ian) Just enter these codes:–

LEVEL 1 : No password required.
LEVEL 2 : REISOR.
LEVEL 3 : ETLBUD.
LEVEL 4 : TABRAE.
LEVEL 5 : ELPOEB.
LEVEL 6 : THENIX.

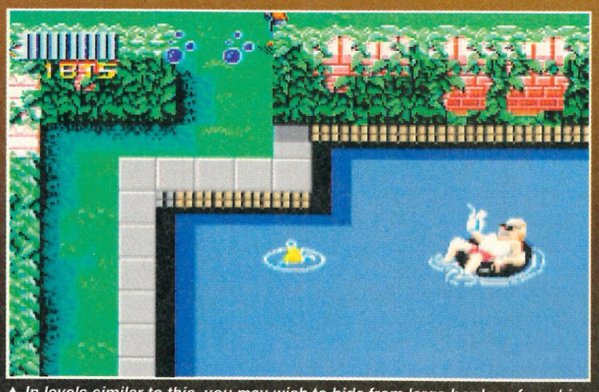
PART ONE

ZOMBIES

KONAMI OFFICIAL

COMPLETE SOLUTION

Welcome to Part One of a new guide. Here we totally crack some of the tougher levels of Zombies ate my neighbours. More levels will be busted wide open next month – Dave.



▲ *In levels similar to this, you may wish to hide from large hordes of zombies by staying underneath the water. A good way of taking a breather, but remember that your supply of air isn't indefinate and can easily run out.*

▲ *Be very cautious when searching cupboards and closets for extra weapons or health packs. There could be a hiding monster waiting to spook you and if your luck's anything like mine it'll be worse than death itself.*

LEVEL 1: FIRST ENCOUNTER

It's during the day that your task begins. In this little neighbourhood there are loads of people basking innocently in the sun and a few babies that are in great peril. You'll need to search the area thoroughly to find every missing person before the zombies reach them. Use your water pistol to dispose of all the foul demons that you encounter along the way. Also keep an eye out for those health packs and other armaments to use later on. Now get going while there's still daylight left.

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LEVEL 5: SPACE MUTANTS

Right you've managed to clear the first area. You've also worked quick enough to still have precious daylight left. So use this invaluable light source to help clear the next street where there are still some more relatives and family friends to rescue. The usual crowd of zombies will be lurking in this vicinity, so use your trusty water gun to destroy these walking horrors. Usual advice: Keep moving and get those health packs and beer cans for later. One more note: watch out for axe wielding maniacs, they take a lot to stop so they're best avoided rather than confronted. The best of luck to ya, you're going to need it.

ZOMBIES

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▲ If you are to deal with the jelly blobs effectively you'll need plenty of fire extinguishers at the ready. The freezing foam will make them brittle so they'll crack up, literally.

▲ Once again you'll need the aid of the lawnmower to deal with the ever growing plants from the swamps. Let's just hope for your sake that you have enough units left to finish the job.

▲ Two keys can be found to the right of here, use them and get the health pack. And keep that fire extinguisher handy. You'll never know when those meddlesome jelly blobs will attack.

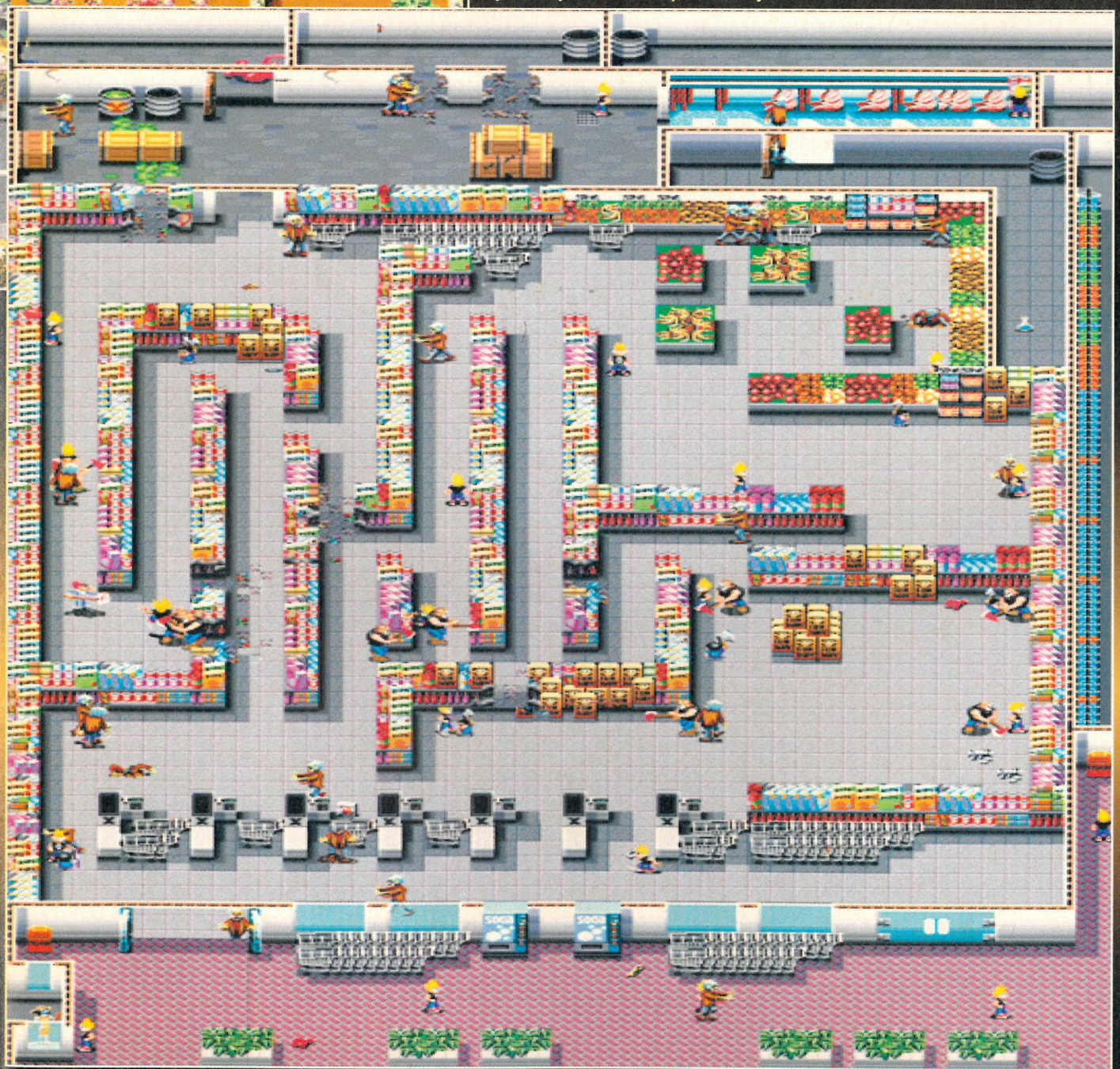
▲ Take great care with the axe-wielding maniacs that patrol the lengths of the Supermarkets. Use the bazooka to knock the wind out of them because no other weapon will stop them which is quite annoying!

◀ LEVEL 9: LANDSCAPE GARDENING

Oh good, good! You STILL have sufficient daylight left. Explore the local derelict sites for tourists and children playing in the nearby industrial playgrounds (building sites)and you'll encounter a new enemy. Some sort of alien breed has interfered with the recent events, and now they must be dealt with as well. Their intentions are to kidnap people and take them elsewhere. They must be stopped immediately! And it's not as if you've got enough troubles already! A quick piece of help though, be wary of the alien's bubble guns. Large droplets of water usually pop a balloon if you want to know. And be very sure not to swallow any of that green waste liquid in the puddles. Apparently it's very harmful if consumed in large quantities. A bit like some other liquids I could mention.

▼ LEVEL 13: TERROR IN THE AISLES

Trouble in the shopping precinct I think! There's some sort of enlarged baby that's been spotted around these parts. Use your weaponry to demolish the evil illusion and rescue the innocent infant. There are also several shoppers that would be glad to see someone vaguely heroic like you. Hidden in the floors below are large nests of spiders that are bigger than a man – use your exploding pop cans to defend yourself. To add to your ever-growing troubles there are several jelly-like blobs engaged in terrorizing crowds of people. They're trying to cover them with their goo-like substance. If they succeed they'll end up claiming a lot of people's souls. Oh and don't steal any of the shop's goods or the security cameras will spot you and you'll be in deep trouble my friend.



ZOMBIES

KONAMI OFFICIAL

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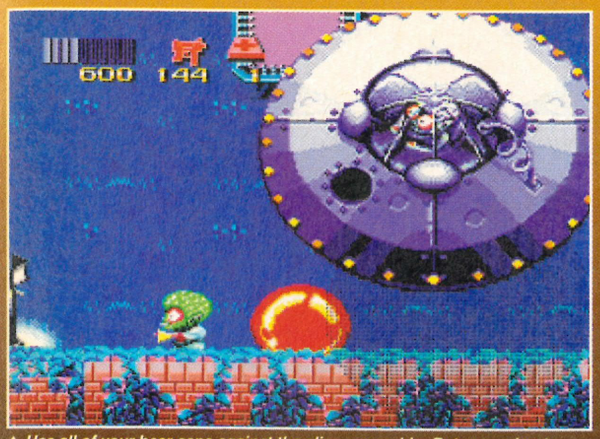
◀ LEVEL 17: SPACESHIP WORRY

Things take a turn for the worse. Midnight is drawing ever closer and the alien population seems to be increasing by drastic amounts. Search the park for panicking people as they try to flee the threat from the warped Dr. Tongue. You may happen to see a large spaceship flying around this area. This needs to be destroyed and it won't be that easy to do. The best way is to wait around the bottom right-hand part of the park. Then hurl pop cans into its open exhaust port.

▼ LEVEL 21: NIGHT GHOUL

Dangers in the corridors of the local school. Large numbers of zombies have been reported to roam these areas so keep an eye out for these. Also patrolling the desolate passages are armies of little blood sucking spiders. We're not sure what harms them, but you can't go wrong with the fire extinguisher. That will slow them up a little. Further reports also indicate the presence of what we call 'Tommy the Evil Doll'. He's pretty tough to kill, so best weapons only.



▲ Use all of your beer cans against the alien spaceship. But remember to only throw them when the exhaust port is open. Otherwise you'll inflict no damage and you'll rapidly diminish your weapon supplies.

▲ Like cupboards and wardrobes, chests should be treated with extreme care otherwise you'll be chatting to an unfriendly ghoul for too long. I chatted to a ghoul once, it wasn't very nice. He kept on trying to suck all of my life force out of my body. Horrible!

COMPLETE SOLUTION ZOMBIES

ZOMBIES

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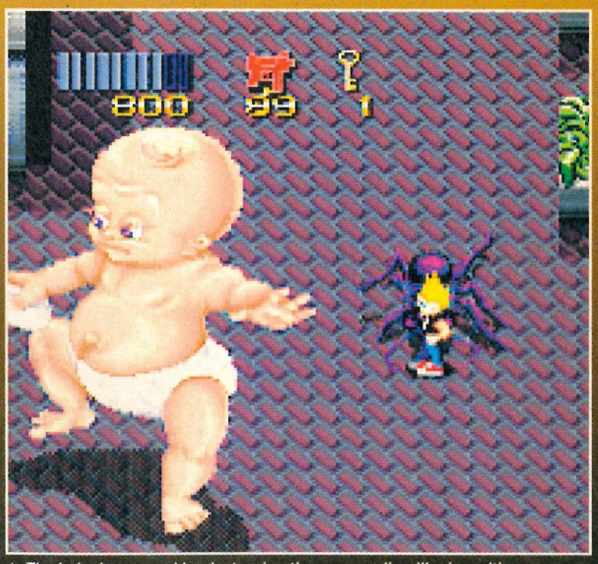
▲ Tommy the evil doll and friends are up to no good. Use the pop cans to stop them. And don't hang around the shelves as he is quite capable of breaking through them in a few seconds.



▲ The baby is rescued by destroying the surrounding illusion with your weaponry. Hmm. Could you imagine the mess if you try to change his nappy right now. It's a thought that I don't like.

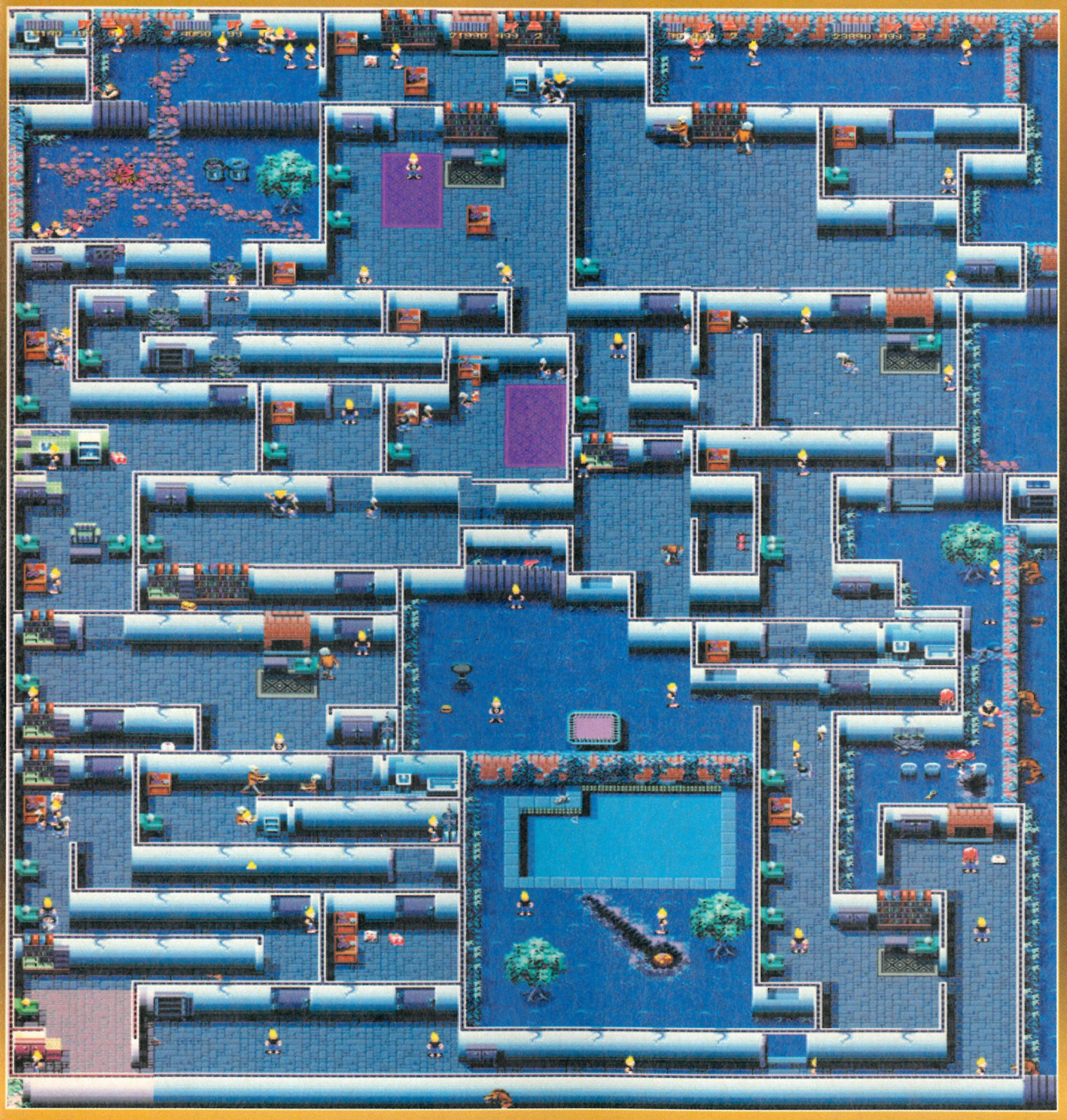
▲ Dustbins also provide extra bonuses. But they're normally positioned where it's hard to reach. You'll often find the contents rewarding though. But normally they're empty and smelly like Filthy, Rich and Catflap.

▶ LEVEL 25: SPOOKY GHOULS

Once again you must face the horrors that surround the outdoors. Use your 3D glasses to their best to assist your vision. Almost exactly the same mission as before, rescue all people encountered whilst destroying any creature you meet from the dark side. If you wish to know the concluding parts you'll have to write to me and beg. But hurry, for Diablo is nearing the plane to Beirut thus leaving you alone in the unexplained realm of the Zombies!

▼ LEVEL 29: MAULING MALL

Another shopping mall is in great danger. The main objective to complete is to rescue all of the chefs. They have been quite oblivious to today's trading figures. But like all victims they need to be rescued nevertheless. I also hope that you have a lot of fire extinguishers to use because there's a huge multitude of jelly blobs sliding around these shops. And to accompany them there are the evil dolls and many spiders to defend yourself from. But the ultimate danger to contend with is the howling werewolves.



COMPLETE SOLUTION

ZOMBIES

PART TWO NEXT MONTH

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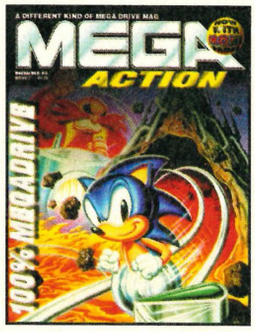
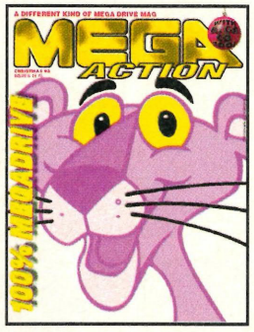
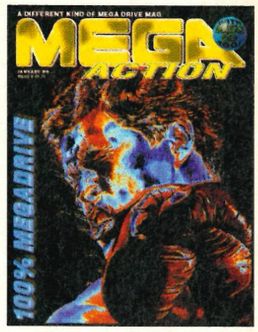


Issue 7 – Sonic Spinball, Streetfighter 2, Zombies, Dune CD, Lost Vikings, Gods, Crash Dummies, NBA Jam
Code: 8607



Issue 8 – Pink Panther, FIFA Soccer, Robocop Vs Term, Eternal Champions, Landstalker, Virtual Pinball
Code: 8608



Issue 9 – Greatest Heavyweights, Legends Of The Ring, Aero The Acrobat, Dune 2, Toejam and Earl 2
Code: 8609

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MEGA JIVE

Welcome to another section packed full of your letters and points of view. Paul's here to answer everything you've got to throw at him. If you have something stunning to tell the world then why not send it into Mega Jive.

Straight in the bin

Dear Paul,

Filling in the Mega Action Questionnaire gives one food for thought. I hope my reply on the colour of some of your pages gives you some. When you become as ancient as me you'll have a better idea of what I'm talking about. I'll just mention here that I've still got my son's C64 and Spectrum! Eat your heart out 'cos I've probably got more games machines than anyone in the whole world.

I don't know about your idea of Reader Reviews. Just imagine I've spent a full week setting up, sweating over writing and rewriting my review on Altered Beast and what do you do? Call me a stupid ******* and sling it in the bin .

What do I do? I can't wait for the next ish to read my review. Fingers shaking, heart attack waiting, ears ringing etc, etc, etc. I open my mag. (We had a bout of swearing here which I've cut out or I'll get sacked - Paul). then I examine every page in case it's in a corner somewhere. (More swearing). I watch a month go by and then begin a daily trek to the newsagents. Great it's in. Next your fab mag is torn up and burnt, never again to be touched by me, the world's best games reviewer. I'll read Sega Power instead!

I am a dedicated games player and would love to see a reader reviews page - or two, so I'm enclosing a few to goggle over before carefully enshrining them in your CENTRE PAGES! God, how slowly the days shall pass by. Remember if I don't buy your mag you'll have no reader. No reader means no mag so you'll be out of a job.

I would like to see more information on add-ons – a lot more. I'm considering buying a VR Helmet but am a little bit cautious. Will it be any use on the games I like?

Oh yeah. I want a Saturn when it comes out so as my reviews will be centre pages you can buy me one. That can be my fee. Hey don't swear at me mate (as if we would - Paul). Ok, Ok. Just my reviews in print will do and maybe 50 or 60 copies of your mag so's everyone around will see what a genius is in their midst. I like signing my autograph anyway!

Ben Kearney, S. Wirral

My ears were burning (honest) after that tirade of bad language Ben. Before we start thanks for returning your questionnaire and the same to the thousands of you who have also posted theirs back so quickly. On the subject of Reader Reviews yours are actually the first we've had but if we continue to get them coming in then we have to seriously start considering doing a feature or even a regular section. If anybody decides to send any in it would be really helpful if you include a recent photograph of yourself so that we can print that too. Watch out for these then in the near future providing the response is good. As for putting them in the centre pages, that'll be no problem Ben. We were actually thinking of printing them in gold leaf too!

We did a big feature in issue nine about add-ons so see page 76 for how to order a copy but we are currently planning a big look at VR helmets. Are they any good? Keep your eyes locked on Mega Action over the next few months to see the results.

While we're at it you can rest assured you'll be first on our list of people to send Sega Saturn's out too. Tragically though we don't have a list. Never mind. I'm sure Dixons will be selling them!

Money grabbing?

Dear Paul,

Could you please answer me a couple of questions which have been playing on my mind for a few weeks now.

1) Why did the price of Mega Action go up in November? Was it some kind of sales plan due to the run up to Christmas? Maybe an increase in costs of materials, or was it just plain old greed?

2) Why does the format of the magazine keep changing? e.g. Intro pages for CD and Cart sections.

3) After reading the "Stop the press" feature in MA issue 10, I have decided that publishing is the career for me! Please could you give some tips on how to get into the industry?

D. Reid, Slough

Hiya D. Let's get one thing sorted out now I'm doing the letters page. No more initials. I want first names because we aren't having any formalities here let me tell you. No name, no answer! Anyway, down to your letter (eventually!)

The price went up due to a number of economical reasons beyond our control. In order to continually improve the quality there needed to be a small increase in cost. At £1.75 though we know we're still better value for money than most.

The format has changed slightly (we hope you think it has improved) to keep things fresh. As the new Editor my prefererences obviously rub off on things a little and certain things have been installed that I'd like to see in a mag if I was buying it.

That's where my experience comes in and I'm not being smug. I've been buying games mags for over 10 years and can spot a bad item a mile off. It's my job to transfer this kind of info to these pages.

As for a career in publishing, Over the Edge had a feature on the very same thing last month. You'll find all the information you need in there. In the meantime, keep reading lots of mags and learning all the time.

Two in a bed?

Dear Paul,

Do you know of any Darts games for the Megadrive? It doesn't matter if they are import or official, if you do know of any could you recommend one, and tell me how or where to get hold of a copy as this would please me greatly being able to spend time playing rather than going out all the time. Many Thanks.

Richard Sutcliffe, Heaton Moor

Darts eh? Well there aren't any that we know of but if anybody knows any better than us then be sure to write in and let us know and we'll pass on the good news to Richard. You might even end up winning Bully's Special Prize, you never know do you?

Sad case

Dear Paul,

Recently I have seen a really attractive man, he keeps popping up in your magazine and also in my dreams. His name (apparently) is Brad Burton. I think you may know this man as it would seem that you work with him.

Could you please get me signed photo of him so that I can show all my friends at Playschool? Cheers.

George, Colchester

(Oh, by the way, please Don't print my address).

Signed photo on the way George. Anything to help the sick.

Low opinions

Dear Paul,

Why are games which you say aren't very good, still priced as expensively as those which you say are good? Do the software companies not value your opinion?

Puzzled and skint Megadrive owner, Glasgow.

Unfortunately there is a standard price for carts (which has just gone up again, £60 for Greatest Heavyweights, it's good but give me a break!) As for the Software companies, believe me they get upset enough if their game doesn't receive a good review! I think they value our opinion. They should.

Clubbing it

Dear Paul,

Do you know if there is such a thing as a Megadrive club anywhere in the UK? By that I mean some kind of gathering of game fans, for challenges, competitions and that sort of thing. If you do know of anything like this could you please publish some information in the next issue, so I can join straight away!

John Wilson, Ainsworth

There are plenty of this kind of thing John and if you glance through the adverts you will sometimes spot one. Next month we'll be bringing you news of a Sports Club for Mega Drive owners that has branches all across the country and holds regular National Championships for its members with a whole variety of games played. As with all things, some of these clubs are very good indeed, some though are sadly crap. Choose carefully and you'll be alright and won't waste your money.

Likkle liar

Dear Paul,
On the subject of the Sega Saturn, my dad is an auto electrician, and he brought some bits home from work one day and built me a 128-bit CD super-console.

One of his friends is a musician and he had some spare CDs, so he made me some games, and I now have over 600 games for my home made console. What a lucky boy I am to have a console four times more powerful than Sega's 'fantastic' new super-console.
Pinoccio Nose, Hertfordshire

Bit sad aren't you? Anyway you are extremely fortunate young man blessed with a wicked imagination and a video games library of enormous proportions. On the other hand you may just have no life worth speaking of.

See off Sonic

Dear Paul,
Recently, with the releases of three new Sonic titles, (Spinball, CD and Three) I have been wondering, when will we see the last of this blue nuisance. I mean come-on, surely a sequel was enough!
Abi Lee, Barnsley

If you've read the review by this stage you'll have found out about the rumours that this could be the last Mega Drive Sonic game. Although there will inevitably be a version for the Saturn when it eventually comes out. It is unlikely Sega will just sack off their flagship character. He's more likely to be milked as much as possible because Sonic = money.

Bright ideas

Dear Paul,
After reading your recent review of "Ground Zero Texas" in MA10, I was quite impressed by the idea of a second opinion box. Please do this more often as it gives a wider view of the game being studied.
Phillip Codder, Stoke-On-Trent

No problem Phillip. We liked it too. The Second and Third Opinion boxes are back with a vengeance this month too!

Where's the girls?

Dear Paul,
Why are all the main people producing your magazine male? Is it sexism? Or what?
Vidette Watts, Wales

Of course not! Behind the scenes here at Mega Action are loadsa gals. This mag wouldn't be possible without people like Karen, Helen, Sarah, Denise, Fiona and little Rita. A look at the credits should show you just how many females are involved.

Neo Nasty

Dear Paul,
Just as a matter of interest, do you know how many Neo Geo systems have been sold in this country? And why are they so expensive?
Richard, London

I have absolutely no idea how many Neo Geos have been sold in this country. It isn't many though, I can tell you that. As for the cost, well the actual system isn't too highly priced but the cost of the carts is silly. This is because of the hardware inside which is virtually the same as a proper arcade machine. Games for this system take you as close to the arcade parents as possible. Unfortunately, not many people support it.

☆ Star letter ☆

Dear Paul,
As I was sat down reading your magazine the other day I was wondering what it must be like for you writers having to review these games all the time. I mean, are you really truthful? Do you really say what you mean or is your judgement ever altered by outside influences? Surely the marks you give these games determine whether they sell well and as we both know, the video game business is one of the biggest markets in the world. Can you afford to upset Acclaim, Accolade, Sega or whoever's game it is you're reviewing?

I was reading an article in CTW – the Electronic Games Trade paper for the industry and the article I read concerned this subject and it mentioned how most reviewers and magazine editors suck up to these software houses mainly so they can work their way up the ladder of success whether it may be in the software or publishing industries. It really does make me wonder whether I can trust any of the reviews I read. This is serious, we are not just talking about a film review here we're talking about kids buying 50 pound games and then I notice there's an official Sega magazine out now – well if that's an official mag how believable is the editorial in that magazine? I'm sorry to go on, but please can you print my letter and give an honest answer, it really would put my mind at rest. Thankyou.
Marsha Frances, Hartlepool

Well Marsha, I read the same article. It did give a black picture but it isn't all like that. A reviewer isn't doing his/her job properly if they have their arm twisted. Of course sometimes it might seem wiser not upset a big company but at the end of the day the kids who buy the games, also buy the mags. If they don't trust your judgement then they'll stop buying it. Once bitten, twice shy as they say. In the long term everybody behaves themselves for the most part. They have too or they get sacked. It's difficult to the climb the publishing ladder if you've been kicked off it!

Obviously we're not in a position to comment about the official Sega mag from EMAP but the same applies. They can have Sonic books the size of Bournemouth if they like but if the editorial is bobbins then people will stop buying it. They know that as much as the next company so even they have the power to slag off a Sega game if it deserves it.

At the other end of the scale there are certain reviewers who make a name for themselves by slating anything they get their hands on, even though a game may not be worth 7%! You have to find a happy medium and I hope that when you flick through Mega Action you'll agree that we've found it.

Censortive subject

Dear Paul,
I would just like to say something on this censorship business. Basically, I feel it is a load of old trash. If Mortal Kombat is so bad that it could make kids go out and start kicking each other to death then why wasn't there the same outcry years ago over games such as Double Dragon?

What next? Will kids go out and start stealing coins and rings like in Sonic or Mario. I don't think so somehow. If this kind of censorship continues I'll just get someone older to get the game I want, otherwise I may as well sell my Mega Drive and get a Game Boy which has no 'bad' games for it.

I also want to ask something about this Mega Drive I and II business. What's the difference please? I just don't understand. And something else on censorship. Robocop Vs Terminator is supposed to be rated 16 but I have not found this on many copies being sold. Why?

Good luck, keep those fingers going.
Rod Law, Tonbridge

Well Rod. People always look for scapegoats to blame bad things on. Whenever there's a serious violent crime it's always down to TV or computers. That's the way of the world unfortunately. Sensational headlines in newspapers sell copies. A sad fact but true. Kids have acted out violence for years. Right back to World War II and well before children used to play soldiers and so on, pretending to shoot one another.

Now that things are becoming more interactive people are afraid of long-term consequences. Nobody knows the real truth because research hasn't been going on long enough. Censorship is being introduced to protect the computer industry from ridiculous statements like those made in the daily press in much the same was as video ratings have eased the pressure on the vid manufacturers.

The debate will run and run. If people would prefer a society with no violence in games, video or on TV then fair enough. They are allowed their views. It is just sad that other people would like to cash in on things so much.

Mega Drive II-wise there's absolutely no difference apart from the casing which has been updated for the 90's. You can still plug your original Mega Drive into a Mega CD II if you're thinking of upgrading and only have the previous machine at your disposal. Not everybody knows this especially if you've just bought one second hand for Christmas.

Nutcase

Dear Paul,
First off, your mag is brill. Well we can't have a letter NOT saying that can we? Do you know what I would do for a free game? My God, what wouldn't I do? If you send me a copy of Landstalker for the Mega Drive I will agree to do a number of things including:
1) I would go to school buff naked and if anyone complained I would let them see my bum and say to them "Kiss that, geek!".
2) I would tie a noose to a light on the ceiling, take some stepladders, stand on top, unzip my fly.....well you get the basic idea.
3) I would try and live without Mega Action.
4) I would take a hammer to my brother's car.
5) I would break into the zoo. Climb into the lion's den. Give it a boot up the backside and say Din Dins!
Anyway, I think you'll agree that that really takes the biscuit. So send me Landstalker. Oh go on!
Chris Sweeney, Lanarkshire

I'm not overly sure that your teachers would like the naked one. For that matter I'm not sure about your shrink either! You have got a shrink haven't you Chris? If not I'd probably think about employing one straight away. As to whether you can have a free copy of Landstalker for your Mega Drive? Well no you can't, but a pretty good try nonetheless! Don't forget to write in and tell us just how far you'd go to win a wonderful free game from your favourite mag. The best will get a big prize in a couple of months so it's worth taking a little time out with your imagination.

Send your letters, jolly thoughts and fond memories to: *Mega Jive, MEGA ACTION, Europa House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield, SK10 4NP.*

Mega Workshop

The Sonic Series

■ **With Sonic 3 set to take the Sega market by storm very shortly, the Workshop looks back at all of Sega's past and previous gaming adventures of that blue dude. Sonic's stardom started back in 1991, with his first venture in the fast paced platformer, Sonic 1. From then on each Sonic release has been eagerly awaited and played like crazy by the millions of Sega console owners. His enemies haven't done too bad either, as Dr. Robotnik brakes away from Sonic and takes on a bunch of jelly beans. Don't forget that every part of the Sonic saga has a deep and meaningful moral for you to ponder over. Read on.**

Sonic CD

Sega £44.99 **92%**

The Doctor has moved on to another world with Sonic in hot pursuit. Robotnik decides to take control of the Little Planet. But he has plans to control the past, present and future time zones on the planet. Plus his babe's at stake so go get 'em Sonic.

A lovely looking intro welcomes you to one of the best platforms available on the Mega CD. Do the old search and destroy mission on Dr. R and find Sonic's babe.

Sonic 1

Sega £19.99 **87%**

The first installment of what has turned out to be the best series of platforms to run, sees Sonic meeting Robotnik for the first time. Robotnik has plans to transform all the cutey, cutey animals in the forest into nasty robots. Sonic thinks otherwise.

Speedy platform mayhem as Sonic legs it round freeing his furry friends from the grasp of the evil Dr. Robotnik, and collecting Emeralds along the way. Unique style.

Sonic Spinball

Sega £44.99 **91%**

Our blue hero will stop at nothing to halt Robotnik's efforts at machine making. He has followed the mad Doctor to his factory fortress on the planet Mobius, and plans to stop the production line. Play the pinball table to assist Sonic in his quest.

Clasp your hands on to those buttons and flip those flippers. Bounce Sonic around the many screens within the volcanic fortress and destroy all those badniks.

Sonic 2

Sega £39.99 **89%**

Two player action arrives at Sonic's door when he joins forces with Miles 'Tails' Power against Robotnik's metallic hordes. They must try and stop his from building his doomsday Death Egg machine, with which he plans to use to take over the world.

This is the same as Sonic 1 but better if you know what I mean. Improvements include the simultaneous split screen two player mode and the 3D special levels.

Dr. R's Mean Bean

Sega £44.99 **89%**

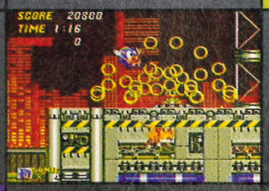
The mad Doctor takes time out from annoying the hedgehog and takes on hundreds of jelly beans. By using his latest invention, the Mean Bean Machine, Dr. R trys to turn all the jelly beans into robots. Compete against his henchmen for the beans.

This is really a clone of the original 'Columns' which works just fine and oozes addictiveness. The tasty graphics on the jelly beans make this a juicy offering.

MINI LEAGUE MINI LEAGUE MINI LEAGUE

	TITLE	PUBLISHER	RRP
1	Sonic 3	Sega	£ TBA
2	Sonic CD	Sega	£44.99
3	Sonic Spinball	Sega	£44.99
4	Sonic 2	Sega	£39.99
5	Dr. R's Mean Bean	Sega	£44.99
6	Sonic 1	Sega	£19.99

Mega shootout

Versus	Sonic 1	Sonic 2	Sonic CD	Spinball	Mean Bean
Mean Bean	Because they are totally different games this is a tough comparison. Sonic 1 is the all original platformer, but there are more recent Sonic titles if you like that kind of thing. So if you fancy a change of scener try out the game with the beans.	Both games are rated at 89%, so I think either would be a good purchase. If you're a high speed platform fanatic then reserve your copy of Sonic 2. But if you love the addictiveness of a 'Columns' style game, then your task should be to save Beanville.	The fact that Sonic's game is on CD pushes it ahead of Robotnik's offering. Sonic CD has more to offer as you are constantly progressing through different levels while in the Mean Bean game the backdrop of the playing screen does not change.	The Mean Bean Machine game is completely different game from the others in this workshop, so a comparison is pretty hard. If you liked Columns, you'll love Dr. R's game, but Spinball is a superb game, with huge levels. This has the longer appeal.	
Spinball	It's that old story again of one game which is good but dated now and the more recent title with higher quality graphics and faster play. Whether you're a pinball fan or not, take to the table for a fast and furious challenge and get those flippers burnin'.	If you're a platform fanatic then you'll be buying the Sonic 2 cart for loads of speedy fun. But if you already own Sonic 1 and don't want to spend your pocket money on an updated version of it, take a look at Sonic Spinball for a refreshing game change.	Again there is a clash here as they are two different types of games. Both received a high rating in our reviews and both deserve credit. So if you've got a Mega CD, I would opt for Sonic CD. But if you haven't got a CD, there's no point in buying it.		Spinball wins
Sonic CD	Time and technology have both moved on since 1991, giving the platform game a new edge. Larger levels, more colours and faster gameplay. With all these qualities it's the CD title that people will want. Well worth considering if you own a Mega CD.	All aspects of the Sonic 2 platformer game have been improved on and the results can be seen on the CD game. Sonic CD may be the winner of the workshop, but with Sonic 3 on the horizon, every other game is going to be left in its dust.		Sonic CD wins	Sonic CD wins
Sonic 2	Sonic 1 was (and still is) highly rated and totally unique when the cart was first released, but as any sequel should do, Sonic 2 bettered it. The special levels play better and a two player mode has been included with the spilt screen action.		Sonic CD wins	Spinball wins	Sonic 2 wins
Sonic 1		Sonic 2 wins	Sonic CD wins	Spinball wins	Mean Bean wins

Under the table

	Sonic 1	Sonic 2	Sonic CD	Spinball	Mean Bean
Graphics	The six main zones look completely different with loads of bright colours used on the foreground as well as the scrolling backdrops. Check out the invincibility power-up when Sonic is surrounded by stars. Not bad.	Improvements have been made on the first Sonic cart with larger levels packed full with colourful action. Even with Tails joining in with some split screen action, the game still has plays well with little distortion of graphics.	There's a great intro showing Sonic on his way towards the next adventure. The animation resembles the cartoon series that's now running on British TV. All of the new levels are crammed with bright sprites.	The graphics on the different machines are all dark, gloomy and mysterious which suits the game as it's set in Robotnik's volcanic fortress. Even though the game plays fast, none of the graphics blur or brake up.	Watching all the beans wobbling down the screen is pretty amusing, with their little eye's looking round. All of Robotniks' henchmen are well animated with loads of colours each with an individual characteristic.
Story	The bad guy in all of this is Doctor Robotnik, who has plans to capture lots of cutesy animals and transform them into manic droids. Sonic must destroy the robots, free the fluffy bunnies etc. and finally take on Dr. R!	Sonic enlists the help of a two tailed fox for his second dose os platform madness. They must stop all the robots helping the power crazed Dr. Robotnik from completing his new Death Egg doomsday machine.	Sonic vs. Dr. Robotnik. But this time Sonic has a personal interest. His girlfriend has been kidnapped. That's right, his woman's gone a missin' and he's not going to rest until they are reunited. Isn't love wonderful?	Sonic vs. Dr. Robotnik (again!). The Doc now has his very own fortress on top of a volcano. He plans to build even more robots by harnessing the power of the lava which Sonic must destroy. Don't forget those Emeralds!	Sonic is left behind here as the Doctor moves in on Beanville to create havoc. You must free the jelly beans for his henchmen and the Mean Bean Machine, otherwise they're destined to be transformed into robots. Oh no!
Specials	By collecting over 50 of the rings throughout each 'act', Sonic gains access to the special level where he must locate and collect one of the seven Choas Emeralds which can be found at the heart of the maze.	There's a whole new look for the special levels here. You follow Sonic as he runs down a 3D chute picking up rings along the way. Probably the best part of tthe game. Collect the usual 50 rings to enter the special level.	Sonic embarks on another 3D mission in the special levels. This time he must destroy the UFO's while jumping over the water canals. Thanks to the CD, this section plays really fast and looks pretty darn impressive.	There are loads of huge levels to explore, with smaller bonus pinball games hidden in certain chutes and tunnels. The levels range from the landfill sites deneath the chemical fortress to volcanic lava filled chambers.	No special levels here, just stack up your beans until your opponent can't stack no more. As you battle against all the henchmen the speed at which the jelly beans fall increases making it much harder to play.
Music	If you couldn't hum all the level tunes a few years ago you were some kind of freak. Even though they're addictive, compared against today's sound tracks they seem dated, repetative and pretty simiplisic.	Not much different from the first installment really. Catchy tunes play along with the action and the appropriate sound FX popping up when ever Sonic or Tails collect a power-up. What can I say, much the same but better.	The CD proves itself again by reproducing a great wall of sound made up of rap, pop and a bit of techno. They fit in really well with the game and really get you in the mood for whipping Dr. R's butt. (or dancin' about)	Everything is up to its usual standard here, there're a fine selection of suitable sound effects and catchy tunes playing in the background. As the game progresses on the music reaches a feverish pitch.	You tend to ignore everything around you once you get pulled into this highly addictive game. I found that the music wasn't that much of an important factor, as the game is strong enough without relying on tunes and hype.
Moral	Sonics first words of wisdom were "Don't just sit there and waste your precious time. When you want to do somthing, do it right away. Do it when you can. It's the only way to live a life without regrets."	Sonic's second appearance was accompanied by the same moral Sonic blessed us with in Sonic 1. Obviously he wanted to reinforce that statement to us all, in an effort to better us and make us more aware of today's society.	"Ask not what others can do for you, but what you can do for others." This short but sweet sentence is a japanese translation in stilted English telling us not to be too selfish. Nice eh? Say that to Sega for charging £45!	Because Dr. Robotnik's fortress is built over toxic lava flows and pools of chemical cocktails, Sonics message to us all is to try and curb the pollution of our planet. Follow Sonic's example and fight pollution everywhere!	There isn't a specific moral to this game, but all you really need to know is that Beanz Meanz Pointz. Whether you like jelly beans or not, it's your moral duty to attempt to free them from Dr. R's evil dungeons.

next month

Don't miss next month's Mega Action if you want all the latest gossip on:

Ryan Giggs Champions
Chaos Engine
Battle Corps
Incredible Hulk
Prize Fighter
Ren & Stimpy
Double Switch
Streets of Rage 3
and many, many more!

Issue 12 of Mega Action will be in your shops on March 24

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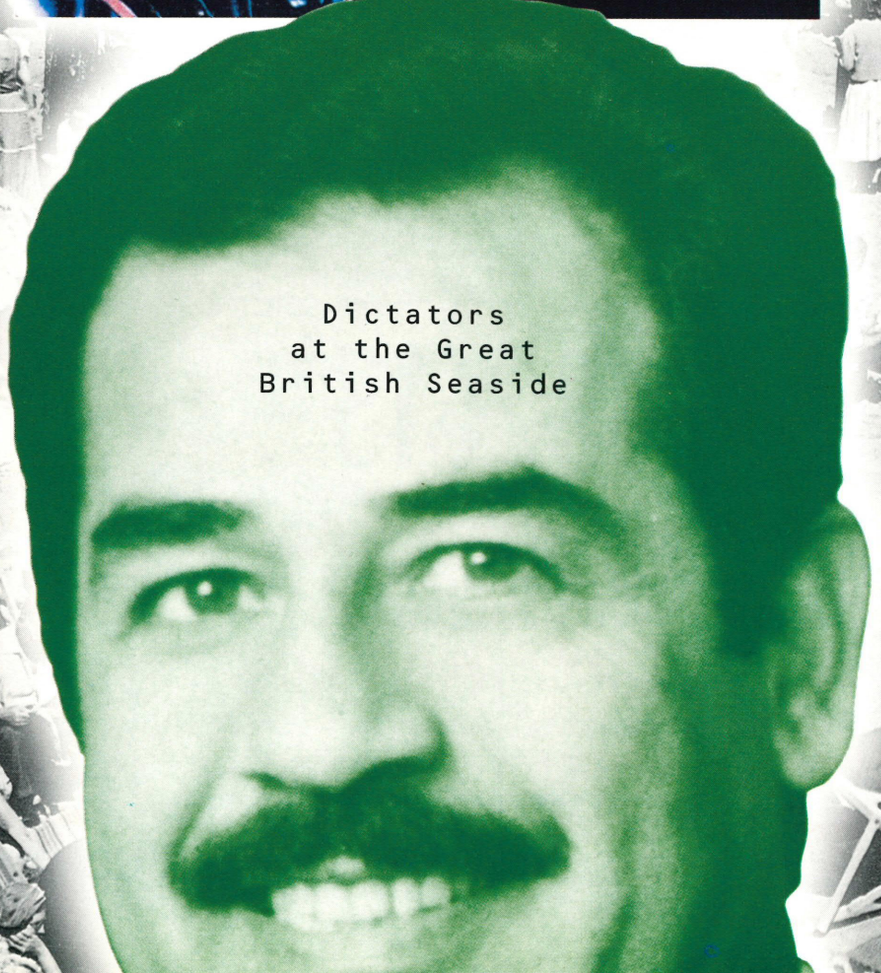

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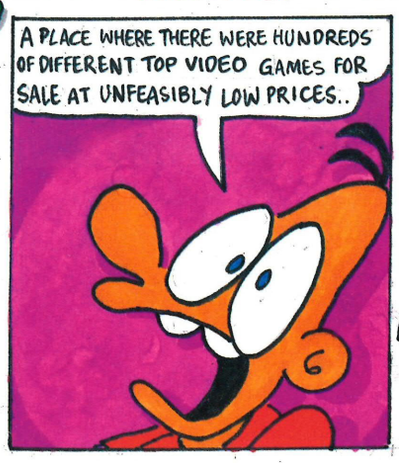

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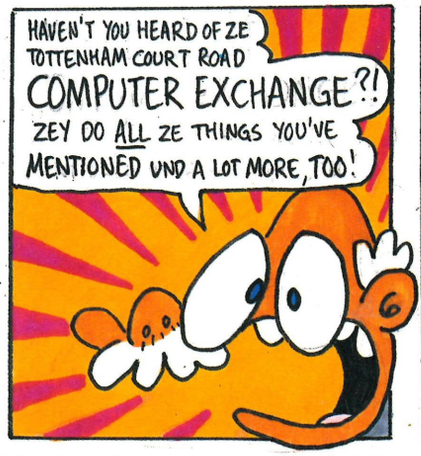

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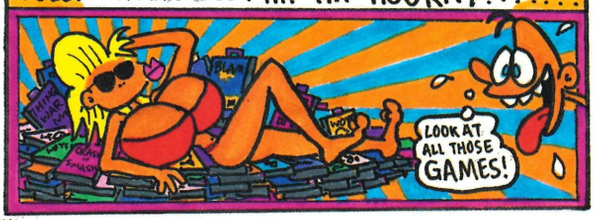

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