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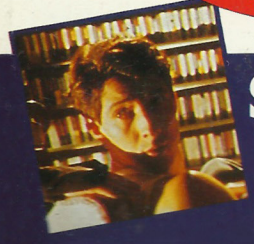

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From cybor-razor cuts to snogging – page 14

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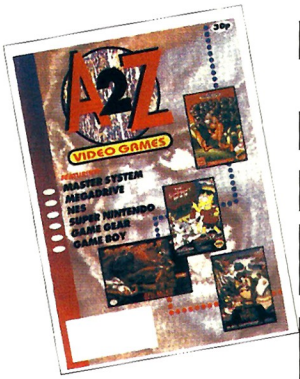

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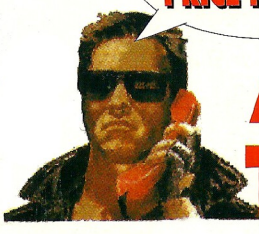

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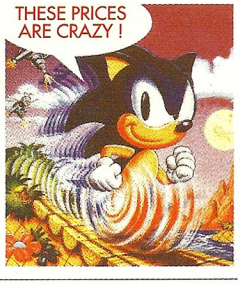

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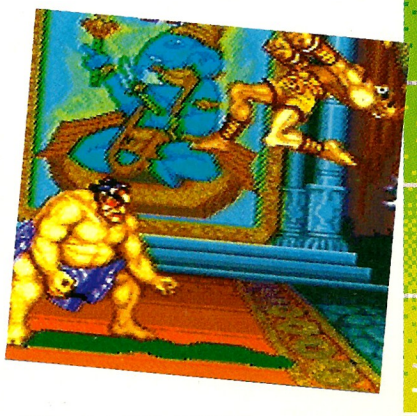
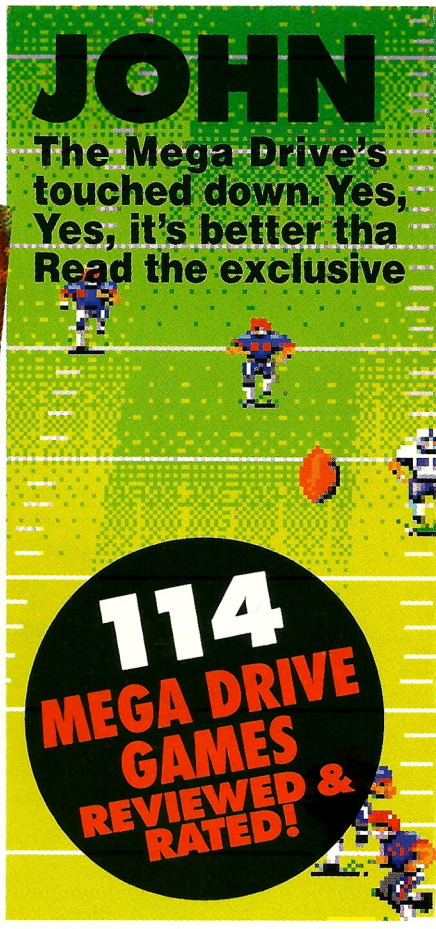
108 pages, 100% dedicated to the Mega Drive and Mega CD. Got a SNES? That's you stuffed then...





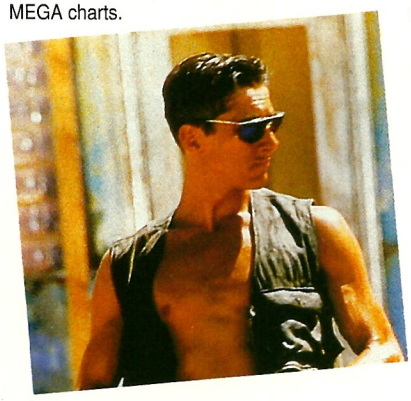
6 MEGA CITY

So when is the Mega CD *really* going to be released? We've got the facts. We've also got all the latest game news from Japan, the USA and around Europe as well as all the news, stories, scandals and gossip from the Sega world. MEGA CITY is hotter than a rhino sprinting in a wet suit. **PLUS!** More Qs In The News, "Bull" Durham and Voyage To The Bowels Of The Back Catalogue.

EXCLUSIVE! *Streetfighter 2 Championship Edition* arrives on March 1. The full story inside...

12 CHARTS

What goes up, must come down: any pole-vaulter could tell you that. But to work out which are the climbers and which are the plummeters takes more than a lycra jock-strap and a length of whittled plank – it takes the MEGA charts.



14 SO WHO EXACTLY *IS* JIMMY?

Sega are planning to spend £12 million (of what used to be your money – it's strange, but that always makes the sums involved seem so much larger) keeping Jimmy alive in 1992. So who is he? Where did he come from? And does he really prefer playing Game Gear to "getting saucy" with his girlfriend? Neil West totally fails to track down the guy with the cybor-razor cut, so instead talks to the people who perhaps know Jimmy best.

Known Jimmy facts:
1. He's Sega's TV ad character
2. Err...
3. That's it.
MEGA receives help with its inquiries on page 14

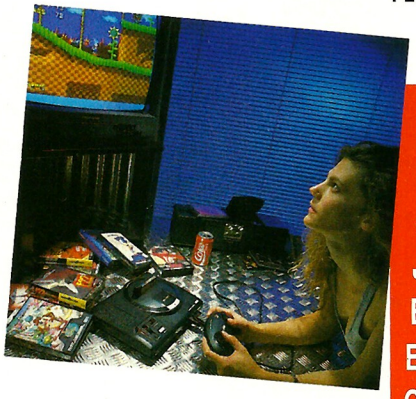
24 PREVIEWS

This month we preview *Mic And Mac (Global Gladiators), Terminator 2, WWF, Gods* (and we'll tell you the *real* story), *André Agassi's Tennis* and *Universal Soldier* – to name just five. **PLUS!** Your complete and comprehensive guide to EVERY Mega Drive release planned for the future.

16 SO WHEN DID YOU GET *YOURS?*

The Mega Drive has only been with us for 26 months – but with an estimated one million Mega Drives in the UK by Christmas, we've all witnessed the "console explosion". But which games were released when? And how did it all happen? We get all nostalgic and almost start blubbing (almost).

Amanda's is two years old – how long have you had *yours?*



22 COMPETITION!

John Madden '93 is in town, and to celebrate the fact, EASN are spending some serious dosh on you lot. We've got a complete Satellite TV and video system up for grabs (essential for following American Football on BSkyB) plus £1600 of carts. *Some* people would say that we're just too good to you lot...

A complete satellite TV system up for grabs AND £1600 of carts!

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Of Illusion • Batman Returns • Home Alone

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MADDEN '93

best game of all time has it's better than *Sonic 2*. n *NHLPA Hockey*. Why? review on page 32...

66 MEGA PLAY
Paul Mellerick (or MEGA Mellerick as a few of our more "creative" or, erm, "gormless" readers have chosen to address him) is the man with the terrific tips and the dirty cheats. If you're stuck in a game, this is the place to try first.

69 RIP 'N' TIP
Sonic 2 busted! OK, so the game may have been in the shops for only a few days... but if you want any help cracking it, this is your essential RIP 'N' TIP six-page guide to success.
PLUS! How do you turn Sonic into Super Sonic? All is revealed...

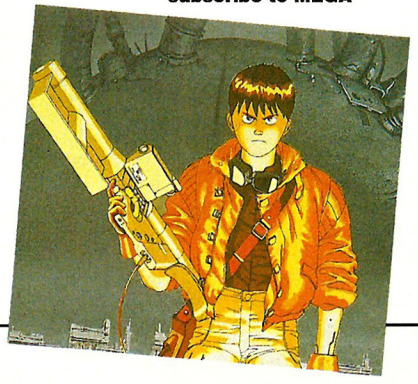
76 MEGA MEDIC
You got a gaming problem that's been getting you down? Having trouble killing the final boss on *Tommy Cooper's Attack Force Nine-Iron* (or whatever)? Then the MEGA MEDIC could be the answer to your prayers...

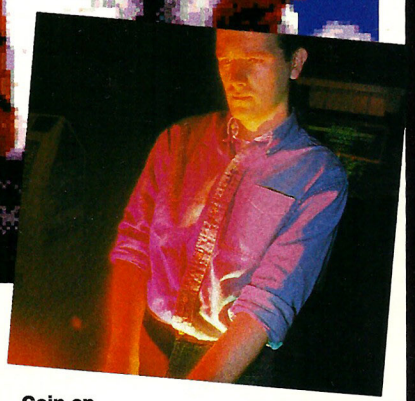
80 ARENA
Hidden levels, secret endings, whacky challenges, it's all here. Come with MEGA as we boldly go where no playing tips have gone before...

82 TOP 100 (CO-STARRING READER ADS *AND* PAST MASTERS)
Yes, the all-time Mega Drive Top 100 games return, but with some shockingly useful additions. Reader ads point you in the direction of that second-hand cart you've always promised yourself, while Past Masters re-reviews some of the best games from the last two years.

92 SUBS AND BACK ISSUES
Fancy a FREE Japanese animated video? Then subscribe to MEGA – Britain's best-selling, super soaraway Mega Drive mag (well, we would say that, wouldn't we?). **PLUS!** Your chance to buy back issues of MEGA. Bargains ahoy!

***Akira* – state of the art Japanese animated video. Free, when you subscribe to MEGA**





Coin-op conversions of the future?

98 PURCHASE
The pick of Mega Drive add-ons and accessories (all recommended by our humble selves) offered to you, the reader, at a discounted price.

100 HOT *SLOTS*
FACT: A large percentage of Mega Drive games are coin-op conversions. *EXCUSE FOR PAUL TO TAKE A DAY OFF:* A feature on the coin-ops that may appear on your Mega Drive.

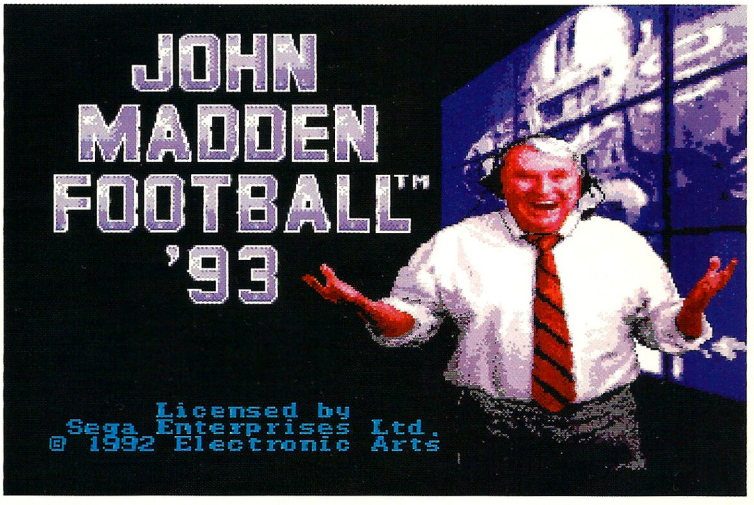
102 MEGA MOUTH
Your letters, and Neil's answers. Potentially a lethal combination. You've been warned. PLUS! The incredible (not to say warped) letters of Harold S Bloxham AND excerpts from the diary of Floyd, the stunt Mega Drive.

106 SHUT DOWN
Your chance to win a coin-op (courtesy of Domark) and a quick run down of all you can expect in next month's edition of MEGA.

Six pages packed with news • stories • g

MEGA

THIRD TIME LUCKY? (HA!)

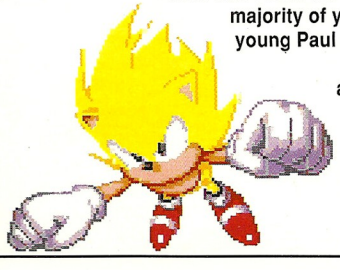


That's right, against all the odds MEGA has come back to haunt you for a third issue...

... but what an issue. This month the biggest news must be our lead review. *John Madden '93* is about to hit the streets, and for our money, it's the best Mega Drive game ever created. It out-manoeuvres *Sonic 2* by a hair's breadth too. So how can it be that an American Football game (a sport which, after all, is not massively popular over here) can be so good, even after two previous versions? Well, to be honest, if you've already bought the previous versions, maybe it won't be your thang... But hang on, we're getting ahead of ourselves. If you want the full low-down on this spectacular achievement, turn to the start of the review on page 32.

Moving swiftly on, we've also got reviews of *Joe Montana 3, Bio Hazard Battle, Batman Returns, Lotus Turbo Challenge, World Of Illusion, James Bond...* Oh god, we're running out of breath. Needless to say we've got all those and more, so turn to page 31 to find out where all these reviews reside. You may want to pay special attention to the review on page 42, where we talk about what is potentially one of the most exciting releases of the year. In reality, it could turn out to be one of the biggest turkeys.

And now for the next BIG thing. If you know what's good for you, flip to the tips pages. We have a spectacular six-page solution and general playing guide to *Sonic 2*. Now, for those of you who are going to write in and say, "Oi, it's not even out yet" or "Oi, don't spoil it for us," the answer is simple. It will be out a matter of days after we go on sale, just in time for you to make use of our complete *Sonic 2* guide during the lead-up to Christmas. If you don't want the game spoilt for you, then don't read the tips. Easy isn't it? Anyway, we're sure the majority of you will appreciate all the hard work that young Paul Mellerick has put into the guide.



Before we shut the hell up, remember we also have the usual things like news, previews, features, interviews and compos galore.

Right, well, that's enough boring chit chat from us. We're sure you're eager to dig straight into this fine mag, so shoo!

Ⓜ Neil, Andy, Paul and Amanda

DON'T BELIEVE THE HYPE!

Ever been ripped off by a bad game hiding behind a big name? MEGA takes a look at why it's allowed to happen...

It's a sad fact that on page 42 of this issue of MEGA you'll find a review of a bad game that's destined to become a best-seller. The graphics are mediocre and the gameplay stinks. So why will it sell by the bucket load? Because it's called *Batman Returns*...

And because it's got a big, juicy, instantly recognisable, commercially-proven, high-budget, lucratively-licensed name. And name's sell games.

It matters little that the game isn't very good – *Batman Returns* is going to be screaming "look at me! Buy me!" to every potential punter up and down the world's video game stores in time for the big Christmas spending spree...

But what happens when they get the game home? They're disappointed that they've just wasted £40 on nothing other than a fancy name. They may feel disappointed, let down or just plain conned.

So why does it happen? Who's to blame?

A license pretty much guarantees a game's success

Let's take a quick look at how this video game industry works. Games publishers buy two sorts of potential money-making commodities: ready-made games from independent programmers (*Road Rash*, for example), and licences. A publisher (such as – and these are purely random examples, we're not pointing an accusing finger at anyone – Virgin, Flying Edge, Sega, Ballistic or US Gold) will hustle and negotiate for the licence to produce the "game of the film/sports personality/TV show/event" and then set about producing a game to match the name – safe in the knowledge that often the name will be enough to sell the finished cart.

Each individual project will have a budget based on sales predictions, so what is spent on acquiring a licence has to be re-couped on programming costs – that's basic accounting. "But," argue the optimists, "surely the process works in reverse as well? If the publisher spends nothing on a film/sports personality/TV show/event licence, then they can spend more on quality programming, and the game will sell because it's so good?"

Unfortunately, it doesn't work that way, for two reasons.

Firstly, a licence is pretty much guaranteed – programmers aren't. A juicy name on a game comes as close to ensuring high sales as you're ever likely to get. If you pay a programming team to sit and brainstorm for six months, it may come up with nothing – you can't guarantee success with human factors.

Secondly (and here's the concrete proof), there are people who's job it is to assess what factors determine how well a game will sell. These people are the distributors. They buy the games from publishers and then in turn sell them onto the shops – it's their job to make sure they buy enough of the popular games and don't get lumbered with the duds. And what do these people regard as the single most important factor in determining how well a game will sell? It's not how well the game performs in reviews, oh no. It's not even how *good* the game is. It's all down to the glamourous name on the box.

Leisuresoft is one of the UK's top distributors, and they've calculated that a game's performance in reviews accounts for just 20% of its commercial success – the *name* of the game is 50% more important, accounting for a highly significant 30% of its sales.

So, it's no wonder then that games publishers keep chucking out big-name titles with little care for how good the games actually are – they already know that they'll make money.

The only way out of this situation is to keep reading mags like MEGA. Try before you buy, read an independent and honest review. Only then will gameplay take its proper place – as a publisher's top priority. In the meanwhile, let's just be thankful for games such as *Lemmings*, *John Madden '93* and *Sonic The Hedgehog*, which earn their fame by truly coming up with the goods.

YOUR VIEWS

What do you think about the whole licensing business? Does a name on a box effect your decision to buy it? Write to "That Batman Bummer" MEGA, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon BA1 2BW.

STREET FIGHTER 2 - KICKING IN ON 1 MARCH?

Officially, Sega Europe are denying it, but after an anonymous tip-off from a member of Sega HQ's software development team, MEGA can reveal that (according to our source) a Mega Drive version of the awesome coin-op *Streetfighter 2 Champion Edition* from Capcom is due for release on 1 March. This is what we've been told...

E Honda gets roasted by Blanka. Just think, within six months you'll be able to boast to your Nintendo-owning friends about your *Streetfighter 2* skills

"It's been complete for two months now – at the moment it's being gametested – but let me tell you, it looks fantastic. It's faster than the SNES version, although obviously we've had to lose some colour on screen.

"All the original moves (including the special moves) are included, and this version of the *Championship Edition* is practically arcade perfect. It's due for release on 1 March of next year."

The *Championship Edition* of *Streetfighter 2* holds quite a few advantages over the original. The most obvious improvement is that you're given the choice of playing any of the four bosses previously unobtainable in the original.

Secondly, two players have the option of playing the same character – the old argument, therefore, of who gets to play the "best" character is instantly quashed.

There are even more moves for each character, with radical improvements in the strengths of each. Is Ryu still the best? Finding out how to deal with all of the bosses' special moves, along with the four new fighters, should prove a challenge.

OK, so this is the news that Mega Drive fans have been waiting for, but we've been in this business a long time now, so before we all start dancing around, let's just take a look at the facts...

It's always been thought that Nintendo and Capcom struck a deal by which *Streetfighter 2* would only ever appear on the SNES and the home computers, thus not being in direct competition. Indeed, Nintendo have designed a whole marketing campaign around this exclusivity; the idea being that if you want to play *Streetfigter 2*, you had to buy a SNES.

Chun Li is pretty tasty with her feet leaving poor old Ken helpless

Dhalsim gets a bit fiery. God knows who the opponent is, he's burning

Nintendo would never (under any circumstances) allow Capcom to break this deal (it would be like playing *Sonic* on a NES) and Sega, Capcom and Nintendo all refuse to officially acknowledge the deal.

Now this leads us to three possible conclusions, and you can take your pick as to which seems the most likely:

① *Streetfighter 2* will never appear on the Mega Drive. With the Christmas spending spree approaching, Nintendo's biggest advantage over Sega in the race for increased console sales is *Streetfighter 2*. If Sega could convince the buying public that *Streetfighter 2* will soon be available on the Mega Drive, Nintendo's main advantage is destroyed.

CONCLUSION: Knowing full well that mags (such as ourselves) will leap on this story as if it were gold dust, Sega deliberately start spreading rumours in a bid to protect their sales of consoles in the busy Christmas season.

② *Streetfighter 2* is ready and *Streetfighter 2* is well and truly planned for release on 1 March, but the legal work is still a little bit messy. Thus, an official announcement is not possible just yet, even though the marketing drive for this new game should be started as soon as possible.

CONCLUSION: Sega are just itching to tell the world about this incredible coup, but don't have the legal go-ahead just yet. Hence the "unofficial rumour" machine is kicked into gear...

③ There's nothing like uncertainty to generate curiosity, and there's nothing like phrases such as "undisclosed sources" and "anonymous tip-offs" to whip up a cloak and dagger atmosphere of intrigue and hype.

CONCLUSION: Sega's marketing department are playing games...

MEGA's guess is that *Streetfighter 2* has been ready on the Mega Drive for a long time (only a small percentage of games developed ever get to see the light of day, a lot are left in permanent legal limbo) and that Sega are trying their absolute best to secure a release. A shift in the legal situation (probably over a technicality differentiating between the original *Streetfighter* and the *Championship Edition* version) has indicated that a release may be possible in the new year. March 1 was plucked out of the air as a suitable date, and the rumours spread.

We'll just have to wait and see, but you can guarantee that this is one story MEGA will be following with great interest.

Increased screen resolution

When a console's been around for some time and programmers have had a chance to get to grips with programming it, they're able to produce stunning results that wouldn't have been thought possible of the machine at its launch. It's recently been rumoured that technical types in Tokyo have discovered not only ways to increase the amount of colours available to the machine, but also the amount of colours displayed on screen at once.

Depending on how great the increase is, this could be hot news for Mega Drive owners. Apparently though, the increased colours are still a long way off, but what has already been achieved is an increase in screen resolution. The method used to produce the split-screen mode in *Sonic 2* is perhaps not a brilliant example, but it's a start, and as we said, the more time programmers have to mess around with a machine, the more impressive the advances will be.

SEGA MODEM RESURRECTED!

Many people won't know this, but when the Genesis (the US version of the Mega Drive) was launched, it was closely followed by a Tele-genesis modem. This remarkable little device was to enable a large number of Genesis gamers to play together and interact through a phone network. Sadly it never took off, but recent news from America suggests that an independent company is now workin g on another modem. It is to be launched in spring 1993 in America and it will probably go by the name of The Teleplay Interactive System.

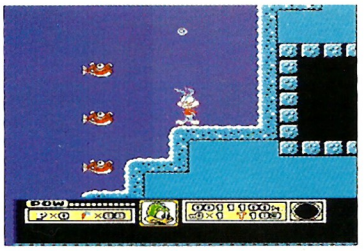
A small box will plug into the expansion port of the Genesis, and a lead will plug straight into a normal phone socket. Then, all the user will have to do is dial, wait to be connected and away you go. It could well be that this console modem will bomb just like the last one, but even if it does take off, it'll be some time before it reaches our shores.

IT'S MEGA HOT LINE TIME AGAIN!

We must be mad, but after two harrowing evenings of talking to our public, we've come to the rather stupid decision to do it all over again. Yes, feel free to ring us up and have a good old chat. Talk about Sega, talk about games, talk about the mag, in fact, talk about anything you like. Yes we'll be here eating fine foods and guzzling Budweiser until either the end of the phone-in arrives, or we crash out in an unconscious heap on the floor.

The Hot Line will take place on Thursday 26 November between 6 and 9pm. The number you need to ring is 0225 442244 and just ask for whoever you want to talk to (or if you don't care, just say MEGA).

Note: We don't charge you anything for this service. This isn't one of those profit-making chat lines that charge you about £50 cheap rate and several billion thereafter. The only cost is that of a normal telephone call. But, of course, if you chat for three hours, then the bill will be a whopper anyway.



TINY TOONS

Those cute fluffy characters take to the Mega Drive in some cartoon related platform tomfoolery from Konami

SHINOBI 3

Joe Mushasi is back, and the game's better than ever. Bigger levels, more action and a tougher challenge should make this one a popular title.

MEGA CD UPDATE

MEGA CD

LINKS
(Virgin)

Virgin have started work on a Mega CD version of the spectacular *Links* golf game, that wowed PC gamers everywhere. The original game had eight famous courses which were photographed and digitised especially for the game, giving it an unparalleled level of visual realism. It also had nine different viewing options, massive panoramic views of the courses, good club selections, and a variety of tournament options featuring distinctly different golfers.

Presumably the graphics will suffer (if only very slightly), but the game's packed with more than enough gameplaying power too. So, as long as that's been retained, Mega CD owners are laughing. Many a working hour was wasted when we got hold of a PC version of the game, so we're all getting somewhat lathered up about the prospect. We'll bring you more news as soon as is humanly possible.

GAMESMASTER MAG

Love it or loathe it, there's no denying that Gamesmaster with Dominik Diamond has struck a chord with over two million members of the gamesplaying public. If you're one of the fans of the show, you'll be glad to hear that Future Publishing (That's the company that produces MEGA) will be launching the official Gamesmaster mag on 3 December, 1992. According to the chaps who are actually working on it, it's fab. Well they would say that wouldn't they? But we've seen some of the stuff they've done so far and indeed, it must be said, it's looking fab.

The format follows the show fairly closely, with show news, challenges, previews and tips from the Gamesmaster himself. As for reviews, they'll be in the same style as those on the show, but there'll be more of them, and they'll be bigger bolder and more informative. Look out for over 140 pages of Gamesmaster action on 3 December.

Gamesmaster mag – coming soon

BATMAN JOYSTICKS

WIN!

Have you read the *Batman Returns* review on page 42 yet. Mmm... disappointing wasn't it. But even if the game's a bit of a turkey, those chaps at Cheetah aren't. They've donated 20 Cheetah *Batman Returns* joysticks for us to give away to the first 20 people who can tell us The Penguin's real name in the film. And we don't mean the actor's name, we mean the name of the character who goes by the name of the Penguin. Confused? Good! That means only people who know their Batman will get the goods. Send your entries to "Bung me a Bat-stick" Compo, MEGA, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW. Entries in by 30 December, so you've got loads of time.

SONIC 2 WINNERS

Rupert Coulson, London; Iain Hepburn, Glasgow; Steven Davison, North Shields; Stephen Fellows, Southport; Zoe Alpe, Essex; T Chapman, London; Elizabeth Wood, Essex; John Collins, Lancs; Andrew Anderson, Glasgow; Chris Bell, Cleveland; Miss Brandy Jolene Farby, Newport; Steven Maylett, Manchester; James Bayliss, Hampshire; Darryl Ablard, Wolverhampton; Daniel Mahon, Glasgow; Daniel James, Compton; S K Jacques, Stoke-on-Trent; Christopher Plumb, Warrington; Ian Swain, Peterborough; T Miller, Kent; Victoria Watson, Birmingham; Paul Furley, York; Viv Cheng, Cheshire; Brian McCullagh, Co. Armagh; Robert Owen, Leeds; Martin Keeler, Manchester; Kevin Holbrook, Cramlington; Colin Davies, Somerset; Andrew Crowther, Shrewsbury; Steven Neira, Kent; Gordon Johnson, Co. Down; C A Long, Dorset; Simon Milner, S. Yorkshire; Paul Muston, Wilts; Nigel Elder, Co. Antrim; Adam Shufflebotham, Evesham; Phillip Martin, N Yorkshire; Richard Ochs, Suffolk; Stephen Dixon, Cumbria; Graham Waring, Staffs; Graham Haw, South Shields; Carl Broadhurst, Surrey; Grant Guthrie, Ayrshire; Dan Smith, Surrey; Graham Davies, Bristol; Oliver Thomas McDonnell, Elburton; Martin Smith, Plymouth.

...And these people, who did not supply a name: 40 Albion Road, Pitstone, Leighton Buzzard, Beds; 11 Berryfield, Penwortham, Preston, Lancs; "Newlands", 24 Long Park, Chesham Bois, Amersham, Bucks.

Sunset Riders

Konami start their Sega range with a conversion of one of their own coin-ops. Hunt down wanted people in the old Wild West, and make lots of money for yourself

BUSMAN'S HOLIDAY

This is the section of the mag in which we choose a member of the industry and expose all the secrets of his or her success. This month it's Dominik Diamond, the spawny git who fluked his way into a plum job on TV.

NO. 3: TV PRESENTER

NAME: Dominik Diamond

JOB: He presents Channel 4's video games programme, Gamesmaster

AGE: 22

JOB DESCRIPTION: He's both presenter and associate producer of Gamesmaster. He is pretty much in charge of choosing which game will make it onto the show. He probably sees every single new release there is.

ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS: He studied and got a degree in Drama (what a thespian) from Bristol University.

ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS: He also did a bit of stand-up comedy as well as some other drama work while studying,

PREVIOUS JOBS: While making the first series of Gamesmaster, he also worked part time as a security guard.

FIRST BREAK: His first break was auditioning for The Word. Luckily, he failed to get the job on that appalling show, but it did lead to the audition for Gamesmaster.

GOOD THINGS ABOUT JOB: Oh come on guys, we're not even going to ask him this one. He gets fame, fortune and unlimited supplies of video games. What a bummer, eh?

BAD THINGS: He got awfully fed up with people regarding him as a bit of a jerk who didn't know what he was on about. In fact, the image that comes across on Gamesmaster isn't really him. He grew up with video games and plays a big part in putting the show together. He's well on-the-ball.

ADVICE: Dominik seemed awfully reluctant to answer this one. We can only assume that the whole job is a bit of a sham and is, in fact, dead easy – money for nothing if you like. Thus, if Dozzer gave away all his secrets, not only would all sorts of undesirables enter the profession, they might also be gunning for his job. Ha! (Er, just joking Dominik, honest – Neil)

HOW BIG?

To win a prize, tell us how tall Dominik's golden joystick is. Entries to "Good God it's Huge", MEGA, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

VOYAGE TO THE BOWELS OF THE BACK CATALOGUE

The column which does for "below average" games what David Icke did for the Green Party

Every once in a while, a software house screws up. Be it a minor guff, a fairly bulky balls-up or, indeed, a monstrous slapping great rumbler of a mistake, it still happens. Why? Who knows? But surely few of these blunders can compare with that made by Ballistic last year. "I know," says one bloke, "why don't we release *Double Dragon* on the Mega Drive."

"Yes, OK," replies his friend, "that's an especially good idea, because as we all know, this game originally appeared in the arcades years ago and even then it was primitive. And just think, we could copy it almost exactly, without having to add anything to it at all, and indeed, if we were feeling really bizarre we could actually make it even less playable than the original."

***Double Dragon*, the biggest pile of crap ever on the Mega Drive**

"Bravo my dear chap," exclaims the first bloke again, "this is brilliant. After all, there are no other beat-'em-ups out there."

"Apart from the brilliant *Streets Of Rage*."

"Ah yes, but apart from that."

"Well, we shouldn't forget *Golden Axe*."

"Erm, all right, but that's about i..."

"*Revenge Of Shinobi, Strider, Shadow Dancer, Budokan,* plus all the stuff you can already get on import."

"Oh bugger," (thinks...) "We're plopped then, aren't we?"

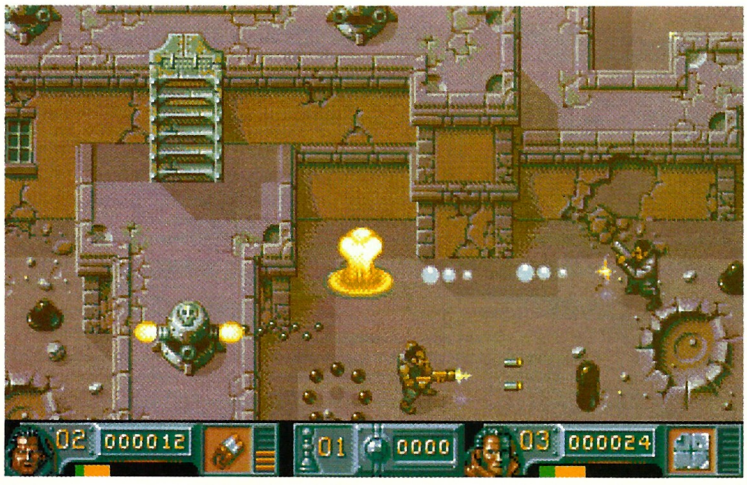
"Not necessarily..."

"Eh?"

"We'll do it anyway, but in the disguise of an 'Arcade Classic'. All those sad old trainspotter types who still consider the ZX81 quite a neat idea and always wibble on about 'how great those old games were' (when quite obviously they were utter dross) and 'they don't make games like that anymore' (thank god) will buy it anyway. I can see it now, they'll all be drooling over it and saying things like 'Oh joy, I feel young again! It's just soooo playable.'"

"I say we do it, we can have it coded by tea-time!"

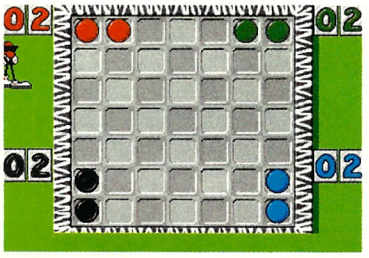
And so it came to pass that one of the most decidedly average beat-'em-ups of all time was plucked from the arcades (several years too late), stripped of the small amount of charm it originally had, and turned into the most embarrassingly unresponsive, ugly, shambling old crusty of a beat-'em-up ever to slot into the Mega Drive. Madness!



The Bitmap Brothers (the programming house that nearly brought us the ill-fated, but really rather good, *Gods*) have been hard at work on a new game called *The Chaos Engine*. It's a shoot-'em-up that takes place during a sort of technological revolution in the Victorian era (with lots of clanky steam driven weapons and artefacts) – a bit like being in a Jules Verne novel I suppose. The Mega Drive version should be ready by Autumn 1993.

SPOT 2

That cool guy from the 7-UP cans is the latest celebrity to pop up in his own Mega Drive game. The game comes from Virgin and is programmed by the same team who programmed *Mic and Mac* (see preview on page 27). It's looking incredibly good, and we should be able to get some more news for you soon.



Here's spot on the Amiga, but don't worry he'll soon be Sega-bound

MUHAMMAD ALI'S BOXING

Another boxing champ puts his name and experience behind a game. This one is programmed by the same team as *John Madden '93* and *NHLPA Hockey*. We've seen an early version, and the graphics and playability look top notch, with a 360 degree rotating ring

MEGA CD - FOUR IN ONE MEGA CD CART

Great news on the CD front. Game compilations (something that isn't economically viable on cartridge) will be appearing for the Mega CD in no time at all. In the States, a CD is available featuring four games, and they're not scabby titles either. God knows how much it costs, but it features *Streets Of Rage, Columns, Golden Axe* and *Revenge of Shinobi*. At last, in a market where you have to fork out forty quid a game, the age of budget console software may finally be upon us.

Terminator vs Robocop

Some of you may have spotted a new comic book in the shops. It comes from Dark Horse comics and it's called Robocop Vs Terminator. It's a right rivetting read, with two of the most impressive film characters of the last decade battling it out big style.

The best news of all, however, is that Virgin Games have secured the rights to produce the game. It's due for release in late 1993, so it's way too early to be able to show you anything. Here's a bit from the comic itself just to get you in the mood.

The most exciting pairing since Torville and Dean on your Sega

SNES convertor

Just when you thought it was safe to play *Street Fighter 2* on your Mega Drive, along comes the Ultra SNES to Mega Drive converter. And yes, I did say SNES to Mega Drive. This absolutely amazing piece of kit is being developed as we speak and does actually work. This not only means that you'll be able play the Mega Drive version of *Streetfighter 2* (if and when it appears), but also the SNES one as well. Talk about overkill.

The SNES does have (and I hate to admit it) some stonking software including *Super Tennis, Contra III* and of course *Super Mario World*. Yep, you can now play Mario on your Mega Drive.

MEGA CD UPDATE

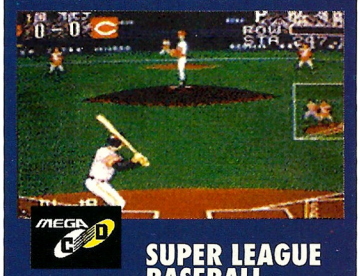
MEGA CD

TIME GAL

(Wolfteam)

Another *Dragon's Lair*-type game, which sees you travelling back through time in order to stop a ruthless dictator from taking over the world. Oh, and you probably get to save some fit tart too. (Shut him up quick – Neil)

MEGA CD UPDATE



SUPER LEAGUE BASEBALL
(Sega)

More stadiums, more players and more stats and realism than ever before. This could possibly be the best ever baseball game.

MEGA CD
Cued up for a March release

The Mega CD is still causing us grief, isn't it? But at least we've now heard that a March release is looking pretty certain. Following disappointing setback after setback (it was supposed to have been launched in the summer at the Olympics) it looks like we're nearly there.

These continual delays have been put down to two factors. The first is that the software wasn't ready in time (many software houses have been beavering away on new titles for some time now), but perhaps more importantly, a launch in late 1992 would have detracted from Sega's other big launch... *Sonic 2*.

Whatever the reasons, there's now light at the end of the tunnel. It'll almost certainly be here in March, so you'd better save up around £250 (although this figure isn't definite yet). And what do you get for your hard earned cash? Well, as yet we don't know what will be bundled with it, so we'll keep chasing this and let you know. Apparently, part of the reason for the further delay is that game conversions of foreign games are proving difficult because of the different television standards. The American system (NTSC) scans at a different rate to British PAL system so the guys at SEGA are having trouble synchronising speech in games. Let's hope they can sort it out in the next couple of months so that they can stick to this latest launch date.

Sega tips book (hurrah!)

There's a new Mega Drive peripheral coming out near Christmas that no self respecting gamer should be without. It's the official Sega Mega Drive Power Tips Book. It's a fairly big beast, it's full colour and features in-depth tips, solutions and playing guides for 50 top Mega Drive games. What's more, it has a further 50 mini tips at the back. It's a snip at £9.99 and it'll be in the shops from 13 November, 1992 onwards.

Of course, when you consider that it was written by a bloke called Neil West with heaps of help from Andy Dyer and Paul Mellerick, then you know it'll be good. Your best bet is to get the book, scream "Wow, this is so good I wish I had tips as good as this every month," then realise that, in fact, by buying MEGA each month, you can.

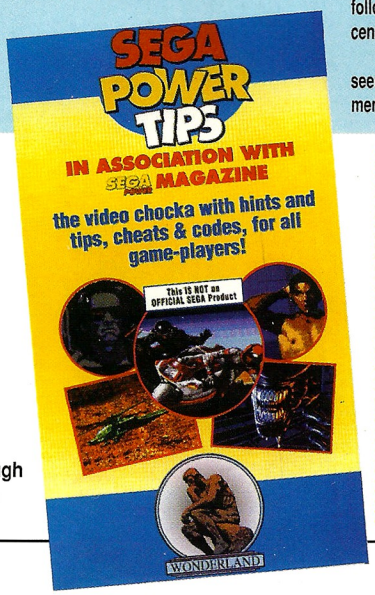
Still, enough gratuitous plugging of MEGA. We've been given 25 copies of this fabulous official tips book to give away to you lot. If you fancy a go, write down the answer to the question below on a postcard and send it to "The Ed's great work of fiction" compo, MEGA, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Here comes that question:
Who wrote that other great work of fiction, War and Peace?

HAMLEY'S GAME CENTRE

For too long the video games industry has been frowned upon. Coin-op arcades and makers of video consoles have been looked upon as the purveyors of a, well, sort of disease. But attitudes are changing. With the console boom, came a change in the video game's reputation. The change isn't complete yet, but more and more adults are looking at their children's gaming habits and viewing them as harmless (or mostly harmless) recreational practices, rather than the coin-swallowing, addictive and rather sordid little past-times that they once did.

Hamley's toyshop has recognised this wind of change, and as a result have set up, in conjunction with Sega, a sort of family entertainment centre in their toystore in London. It's called Hamley's Metropolis, and it contains all manner of consoles and coin-ops (including Sega's brilliant *R-360* flight simulator) for families to go along and play with. Sega are hoping to follow this up by opening more and more of these centres all over the country.

Perhaps now, at long last, video gaming can be seen as wholesome family entertainment and not a menace. Hear hear!



Tips video

Our sister magazine Sega Power has recently created a tips video, which is currently on sale at Woolworth stores everywhere. It costs a paltry £8.99, and features a range of tips on 15 great games including *Desert Strike, Road Rash, Alien 3* and *John Madden '92* to name but four.

Each game is dealt with in depth and there are live images of the games being played, while a voice-over helps you through any difficult sections – a perfect stocking-filler if ever I saw one.

JUNKERS HIGH IS NIGH

Get ready for some racing action in a similar vein to Taito's *Chase HQ*. In this game you have to race after villains and knock them off the road. Unlike the game it tries to emulate, this is set in the future with some incredible weapons, so it should be one helluva a blast.

We'll let you know more about this up 'n' coming Sega release when we get it. And don't forget, for all you high speed race freaks, we'll be reviewing Road Rash 2 in the very next issue of MEGA.

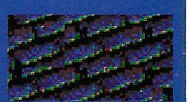
THE Q S IN THE NEWS!

So you think you know your Sega? Well, now's your chance to find out just how good you are. Have a crack at the 20 question below. Then all you need to do is turn to page 106, add up your score and discover just how inept you are. Simple as that!

1. In the manual that accompanies *Taz Mania*, Taz is described as rambunctious.
Does this mean
a) Ravenous, consistently hungry
b) Difficult to control, boisterous
c) Excessively hairy
2. What's the name of the team you control in *Speedball 2* (in one-player mode)?
3. How many points do you get for collecting all the diamonds in the correct order in *Rainbow Islands*?
4. How many fish do you have to guide to safety on the second level of *James Pond*?
5. What's the name of the big boss in *Golden Axe*?
6. What's the longest straight row of gems you can make in *Columns*?
7. What's the name of the American version of *Gynoug*?
8. Who hosts ITV's new video games show, Bad Influence?
9. *Sonic 2* is about to hit the streets, but when was the original *Sonic* game released?
10. Who played the rather nasty bloke called Shreck in *Batman Returns*?
11. Which is the odd game out?
Golden Axe
Streets Of Rage
Double Dragon
Pat-A-Cake
12. Who was the 1991 Sega European Champion?
13. Which company is sponsoring Virgin's *Mic And Mac – Global Gladiators*?
14. What's the new light gun for the Mega Drive called?
15. How many Megabytes are there in a sixteen Mbit game?
16. Who created the Bart Simpson character?

17. What game's this then?

18. Alright, how about this one?



19. OK clever clogs – bet you don't know what game this is...

20. Get this right and we'll be well impressed...

You started now you've finished. Answers (The As on the back page) are to be found on, er, well – the back page. That's 106 to you and me. Quick, go and tot up your score to find out how well you know your Mega Drive. More crappy questions next month.

THE CHARTS

A time comes in every writer's life when he has to say, "Sorry, but there's not one bloody interesting thing to say about the charts". That time is now

OFFICIAL TOP 20

This month	Last month	Game Name	Mega Top 100 Rating (page 82)
1	■ (01)	**Euro Club Soccer**	M 85
		It's not the best football game in the world, but it is the most decent soccer sim that's currently available for your Mega Drive.	
2	▲ (08)	**Alien 3**	M 74
		This decent platform shoot-'em-up is very atmospheric and very true to the plot of the film. That's why it's still rising up the charts.	
3	▼ (02)	**Taz-Mania**	M 21
		It may have dropped a place, but this brilliantly platformer is still deservedly doing very well. Almost as fab as the TV cartoon.	
4	▼ (03)	**Terminator**	M 41
		Not the most challenging game in the world (only four levels), but it looks good, plays well with the pedigree of the film behind it.	
5	▼ (04)	**Super Monaco GP2**	M 05
		This is worth buying if you don't already have the original. It's one of the best driving games you'll find on the Mega Drive.	
6	▼ (05)	**Desert Strike**	M 17
		Is there anyone who doesn't like this game? We doubt it. Almost faultless all-out blasting action. If this doesn't excite you, you're dead.	
7	■ (NE)	**Bulls Vs Lakers**	M --
		Same as *Team USA Basketball*, except you get the NBA tournament included in this official version. Great for basketball fans.	
8	■ (NE)	**Dragon's Fury**	M 48
		Graphically spectacular and very varied pinball simulator. Plays like a real table, but contains a whole lot more challenge besides.	
9	▼ (07)	**Italia '90**	M --
		What are you playing at? This must be one of the worst footy games ever, and you guys are buying enough to keep it in the charts.	
10	▲ (13)	**Super Hang On**	M 55
		Getting on a bit now, but *Super Hang On's* new budget status has given this almost classic race game a new lease of life.	
11	▲ (15)	**Super Thunderblade**	M --
12	■ (NE)	**PGA Tour Golf**	M 12
13	▼ (09)	**Alex Kid Castle**	M --
14	■ (14)	**Streets Of Rage**	M 07
15	▼ (06)	**Olympic Gold**	M 49
16	▼ (11)	**Road Rash**	M 10
17	▼ (12)	**EA Hockey**	M 03
18	■ (NE)	**John Madden '92**	M 01
19	■ (NE)	**Hollyfield Boxing**	M --
20	■ (NE)	**Star Control**	M 64

SOLD!

This is Paula. She's 14, lives in Bath and has got a copy of *Bart Vs The Space Mutants*

A big hello to Reza, who's 15 and is a bit of a boy racer

Marsha fancies her chances on *Gynoug*. She's 15 and also lives in Bath

Zoe's nine, she's into *Sonic* and lives in, er, Bath. Detectives out there might have noticed a pattern emerging. That's right, we did the photo shoot in Bath

Official charts compiled by **Gallup** and sponsored by Penguin. Import charts compiled by **Whizz-kid Games**

IMPORT TOP 20

This month	Last month	Game Name	Mega Top 100 Rating (page 82)
1	▲ (20)	**Lemmings**	M 06
		A stunning game in every respect. Massive playability, fiendishly addictive puzzles, and a monstrous 200 levels. Real value for money.	
2	▼ (01)	**Alien 3**	M 74
		Well, we've already said it. If you liked the film (and who didn't?), you'll probably like this. Atmospheric, challenging and very playable.	
3	■ (NE)	**NHLPA Hockey**	M 03
		Our rating of 92% in the first issue of MEGA speaks for itself really.If you don't own *EA Hockey*, this is an essential purchase.	
4	▼ (03)	**Dragon's Fury**	M 48
		Pinball plus. A table that's several screens long and heaps of bonus screens and other "bizzare" features. This is absolutely brill.	
5	■ (NE)	**Cyber Cop**	M 67
		You may know it by the name of *Corporation*. It's a futuristic 3D adventure with blasting action. Oh yes, and it's pretty bloody good.	
6	▲ (16)	**Predator 2**	M --
		It must be selling on the strength of the film alone. This really isn't up to much. In fact, we only gave it 28% in last month's issue.	
7	■ (07)	**Dungeons & Drags**	M --
		An above average role-playing game. It ain't the best of its kind out there, but real fans of the genre might like to give it a go.	
8	■ (NE)	**Wld Trophy Soccer**	M 85
		This is the American version of *European Cup Soccer* (from Virgin). The game is identical, apart from the league (World rather than Euro).	
9	▼ (05)	**Taz-Mania**	M 21
		As Taz himself might say "WAAKAINNNGHGRKUNNNNGH... PHBTBPRTPHRT!" Roughly translated, this means "It's good".	
10	■ (NE)	**Team USA**	M 46
		If you want a basketball game, this is probably the one to go for. Really rather playable with good intelligent opponents.	
11	■ (NE)	**Splatterhouse 2**	M --
12	▲ (17)	**Smash TV**	M --
13	▼ (11)	**Chuck Rock**	M 61
14	■ (NE)	**Greendog**	M --
15	▼ (13)	**Krusty's Fun House**	M 40
16	▼ (12)	**Bart Vs Space Mutants**	M --
17	▲ (18)	**Desert Strike**	M 17
18	■ (NE)	**Aquatics**	M --
19	▼ (06)	**Bulls Vs Lakers**	M --
20	▼ (08)	**Side Pocket**	M 23

EXCELLENT!

OFFICIAL SEGA SEAL OF QUALITY

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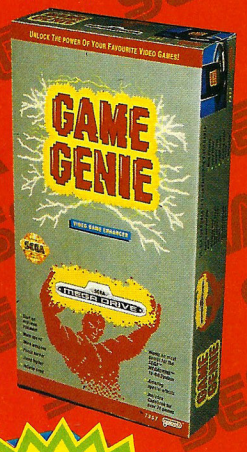

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INVENTED BY CODEMASTERS

So who exactly is JIMMY?

Yes, who is he? And more to the point, why are Sega planning to spend £12 million keeping him alive in 1992? Strangely unable to pin him down for a face-to-face interview, Neil West is left to speculate on the enigma which is Jimmy, the man with the cybor-razor cut

He's the ultimate games player, according to Caroline Warner, producer of Fast Food, Sega's very first Jimmy advertisement. "He hasn't got a job, he just plays games," said Caroline. "Some guys play golf, some play poker – Jimmy plays Sega."

Jimmy appeared on the nation's TV screens for the first time during James Bond's Moonraker in September of last year. The advert was directed by John Lloyd (of BBC's Blackadder fame, who also directed the hugely successful Red Rock "It's not red and there are no rocks in it" ads with Leslie Nileson) and filmed by the cameraman who shot Superman (technical TV-speak there, Soops was never actually shot by anyone). This ad (costing £0.5 million to make – as much as a small movie) marked the start of a whole new direction in advertising from Sega.

They'd previously dipped their toe into the water of TV advertising with the "Talking Telly" campaign – the one that spectacularly didn't quite manage to get the nation buzzing with the catchphrase, "Do me a favour... plug me into a Sega". Sales still boomed, however, so a new campaign was planned and plotted...

As the face of videogamers in 1992, he had to be the epitome of popularity

It was decided that an older, more sophisticated and (damn it) more street credible image was needed. So, Philip Ley (Sega Europe's Marketing Director) made *that* call to top London agency WCRS, famed in the big glasses-wearing, fast-moving, lunch-doing world of TV advertising for their successful campaigns with Carling Black Label, BMW, Prudential and (if you can remember this far back) the Electricity sell-off Frankenstein ads. The matter was in the hands of the experts, and soon Jimmy was born...

The one word which had governed Sega's entire marketing strategy since the very beginning of time (1989) had been "street cred" (OK, OK – two words), and so Jimmy had to be perfect. He needed to epitomise this image to the exact detail. He had to be cool, handsome, hard, and (of course) good at games. So who was there around who could play the character?

FINDING MR RIGHT

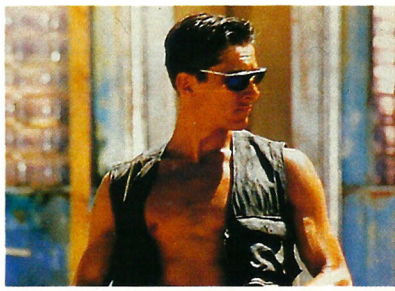
Peter Wingfield is the name of the actor who plays Jimmy. He's a fairly successful actor (you occasionally see him featuring in plays and dodgy – sorry, "arty" – films), but if you've got one of those "I'm-sure-I've-seen-him-somewhere-before-y'know-but-I-can't-*quite*-put-my-finger-on-it" niggles, then bells will probably start ringing when we tell you that he was the star of the Tennant's LA advertisement.

Peter was the guy who took his girlfriend to the fair, feebly attempted to knock a coconut off a shy: failed abysmally, so decided to nick the coconut anyway. Hmm. Don't try this at your local fair, kids, or you'll be gagged, bound, brainwashed and will be appearing as a bearded lady before you can say "thieving gypsy gits".

But does he make the grade? After all, he's Sega's main man – he's the face of videogamers in 1992. If he's a real wimp, then it's anoraks and train-spotting for the rest of us forevermore (in the eyes of the "real world" at least). He's the man that has the job of dragging video games out of the arcade and into that same real world.

So, let's take a look. *Is* he cool? Well, anyone who'd rather play Game Gear than snog a sexy sauce-pot has got to be fairly cool (although not just a little warped). The sauce-pot in question is called (in real life) Alya. She's famous in Australia as the "Coke girl" (those *lips*) and also for appearing in Levi's ads (those *legs*), though how she feels about appearing in a Sega TV advertisement only to be ignored in favour of a battery-powered handheld is anyone's guess.

But yes, Jimmy is cool, or on sedatives, one of the two. WCRS confess that Jimmy's "cool" is taken from actors such as Rutger Hauer, Mel Gibson and even Mickey Rourke (although thinking about it, that could make him a hairy, bratwurst-scoffing Australian, prone to taking his clothes off every five minutes) as well as featuring elements from a few carefully selected pop stars – so it *should* all add up to cool. In principle, at least.



Coo! What a *hunk*. Jimmy gets ready to take on all that a Game Gear can chuck at him. But why Jimmy? And who's he meant to be? Read on...

Next, is he good looking? Now I'm not going to be the one to answer this one, on the grounds that Paul and Andy are reading. Instead, over to our gorgeous pulsating hunk of manhood expert, Amanda: "Lovely. He's pretty damn fit actually and I'd let him ..." (Steady on – Neil). So yes, he makes the grade in the looks stakes.

But is he hard? Well, I wouldn't be the one to call his pint a poof, and you've got to figure that anyone who nicks a coconut from a fair has got to fancy himself as a little bit tasty (either that or completely stoked on Watney's Red Barrel – so maybe *that's* why he'd moved on to the LA...). Anyway: cool, good-looking and hard – that's our Jimmy.

GAMES GOD?

But is he any good at games? Who knows, but as the adverts continue throughout 1993, you'll be seeing a lot more of this man. Sega are planing a beefy £12 million total advertising spend for 1993, and a fair sized dollop of this will be heading in Jimmy's direction. Is he really worth it? Surely all that money could have been used to make carts cheaper? Maybe Sega could have cut the price of Mega Drive's instead? Well, maybe. But as Mega Drive sales approach the big one million mark, Sega reckon their man with the cybor-razor cut earns his keep. And good luck to him.

JIMMY'S BUS

Jimmy's juggernaut will be touring the country. For dates and deals, stay tuned to MEGA.

When you get

"The complete history of Mega Drive in the UK" or (if we're feeling clever) "Genesis – the creation of a video game legend". Either way, when did you join in the fun? And how was it all achieved? Read on...

August 1, 1990 – doesn't sound so long ago, does it? It only seems like yesterday when Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles beamed out at you from every shop, TV programme, or crisp packet and Julia Roberts redefined just how great a long pair of legs could be in the movie Pretty Woman.

But just 27 months ago there were no official Mega Drives in the UK, no Sega magazines, no shops crammed with Mega Drive carts and certainly no Gamesmaster TV show. Eight-bit machines ruled the console roast, but were still a long way behind Amigas and Atari STs in the popularity stakes.

But then came the console boom – an explosion of video game technology that's still gaining strength. As you read this feature, Sega reckon to have sold over 650,000 Mega Drives in the UK – come January 1, after the Christmas season, that total will have reached the big one million. Laid end to end, that's enough Mega Drives to... well, that's 174 miles of Mega Drives.

So come with MEGA and those helpful people at Sega Europe as we chart the Mega Drive's growth in the UK. Each entry is dated with the biggest game at the time (these were the state of the art, ground-breaking titles of their day), each significant marketing decision, and a running tally of the number of Mega Drives thought to be up and running in the UK. We've also included the number one hit single of the time and the film which was doing the business in the nation's cinemas – just to act as memory joggers for the time scale.

THE STORY SO FAR...

In the beginning, there was darkness, then... (Let's just stick to the facts – Neil). OK, the Sega Master System was launched in September 1987 at the Personal Computer World Show at Olympia.

Philip Ley, Marketing Director of Sega, now says of the time:

"We weren't sure how the Master System would do – everyone was worried about competing with computers. But Sega was originally in the arcades and much of our initial success came from putting great arcade games in the home. Anything in our catalogue that came from the arcades gave us cred with the players, but we didn't want to stress that connection too much because at the time there were stories of people being macheteed in arcades – and we needed parents' approval back then."

Fair point. Just to put this into context, at this time ears were being assaulted by Rick Astley with his appalling Never Gonna Give You Up. Doesn't feel that long ago does it?

The first Sega ad campaign was launched during October 1989, featuring that stripey talking TV with his oh-so-snappy catchphrase, "Do me a favour, plug me into a Sega". The talking TV was everywhere, on T-shirts, in mags, in shops... everywhere. The Sega boom was starting just as Ride On Time by Black Box was the thing to slap into your Walkman.

In February 1990 the Sega Genesis was launched (and goes down a storm) in America, out-stripping its then main-rival, the PC Engine. But UK gamers have to wait for the Mega Drive for six months, and so it's in September of 1990 that our story starts...

SEPTEMBER 1990

Number One Game: *Altered Beast*
Number One Single: The Joker by The Steve Miller Band (again)

***Altered Beast* was a very early Sega release, which left a lot to be desired**

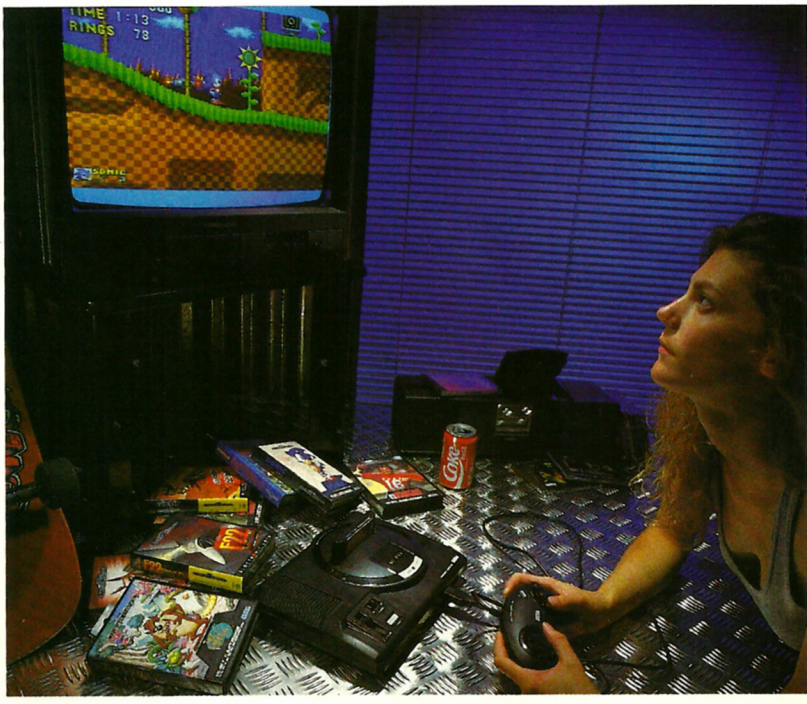
The Mega Drive arrives. Yes, after thousands of man hours, millions of Yen and none too few bottles of Saki (plus the safe knowledge of the machine's huge success in Japan and the USA – Sega aren't mugs), 30,000 pre-sold Mega Drive units land in British stores and sell out immediately.

In the words of Sega Europe's boss, the 16-bit console was "the most eagerly awaited consumer electronics launch since the colour TV". Well, almost.

Nintendo argued that the 16-bit launch was too early and would ruin the 8-bit market, but due to increased interest after the Mega Drive launch, Sega's Master System sales go up.

Number of Mega Drives in the UK: 140,000 (estimated) (This batch of Mega Drives were unofficial imports into the UK.)

did ou yours?



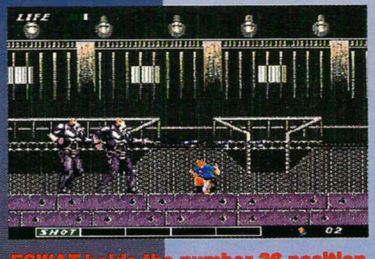
OCTOBER 1990

Number One Game: *ESWAT*
Number One Single: Unchained Melody by Righteous Brothers

Sega launch their second mega-buck ad campaign with a new face peering out of the colour bars in the TV. Animator, Christian (Terminator II) Hogue produces a harder, less childish face with yet more street cred. The summer of '90 ends with Sega's first grown-up promotion – the Sega Splash 4 Starlight.

Over 30 home-grown pop stars gather to play silly, silly, silly water games, raise money for children's charity and give Sega that all-important media coverage: Philip Schofield's radio show is broadcast live from the event. What's this? Video games coming out the bedrooms of spotty adolescents? Celebrity endorsement has just started...

Number of Mega Drives in the UK: 170,000 (estimated)



***ESWAT* holds the number 36 position in MEGA's Top 100 games**

NOVEMBER 1990

Number One Game: *Populous*
Number One Single: Unchained Melody by Righteous Brothers

***Populous* holds the number 28 position in MEGA's Top 100 games**

Big-name celebrity endorsement doesn't come much bigger than this: Michael Jackson is hired to help convert his film Moonwalker into a Mega Drive game. Michael and Sega subsequently make 33 TV appearances in the next four months, and the company gets its second huge wave of press coverage in its UK history – a major coup for the Sega marketing department resulting in a big increase in sales.

Number of Mega Drives in the UK: 190,000 (estimated)

DECEMBER 1990

Number One Game: *Golden Axe*
Number One Single: Ice Ice Baby by Vanilla Ice

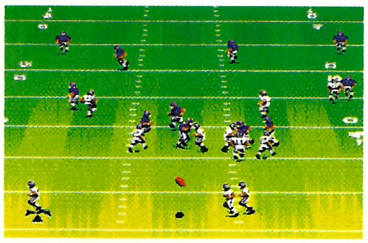
A certain Neil West writes his first Mega Drive games review for Sega Power magazine. Hardly a momentous occasion in the history of video gaming, but a date to despise for all those now forced to work with the tyrannical powermonger.

Number of Mega Drives in the UK: 210,000 (estimated)

FEATURE

JANUARY 1991

Number One Game: *John Madden Football*
Number One Single: Sadness by Enigma
The game that would evolve to become the single most impressive video game of all time arrives. *John Madden Football* from Electronic Arts shows just what the machine is capable of in terms of graphics, sound and gameplay. Many people would argue there's still nothing to better this video game milestone two years further down the line. MEGA would agree with them.
Number of Mega Drives in the UK: 240,000 (estimated)



***John Madden Football*: Developed into *Madden '93* – the best game ever**

FEBRUARY 1991

Number One Game: *Phantasy Star 2*
Number One Single: Do the Bartman by The Simpsons
The first news of Sega's (as yet unnamed) CD Rom add-on breaks from Japan. No one knows what it will really be able to do, no one knows when it will be available in the UK, and no one knows how much it will cost when it finally arrives. Some things, it would appear dear readers, simply never change...
(Actually that's not strictly true. Yes, MEGA breaks the mould by offering you more up-to-the-minute Mega CD news in MEGA CITY, starting on page 6.
Number of Mega Drives in the UK: 255,000 (estimated)

***Phantasy Star 2* holds the number 33 position in MEGA's Top 100 games**

MARCH 1991

Number One Game: *Super Monaco GP*
Number One Single: The One and Only by Chesney Hawks
News breaks that 100,000 Mega Drives have been sold between September and January of 1990, making the Mega Drive the fastest selling console in the UK. OK, OK, so it wasn't exactly up against particularly stiff opposition (ie the Master System, the NES and Commodore and Amstrad efforts), but that's not the point.

Pat "Take two bottles into the shower? Not me! I need at least 30" Sharpe gives the Mega Drive a big promotional thumbs up (for what that's worth) and giant American retail-chain, Blockbuster, starts selling Mega Drive gear in the UK.
Number of Mega Drives in the UK: 270,000 (estimated)

APRIL 1991

Number One Game: *Moonwalker*
Number One Single: The Shoop Shoop Song (It's in his Kiss) by Cher
Moonwalker arrives, and for the first time, the mass media actually takes interest in a Mega Drive game. Video game coverage in national newspapers is common today (notably in The Sun and The Daily Mirror), but in April 1991, well, Sega's marketing department would have performed climbing stunts in Trafalgar Square in pursuit of six column inches.
(There's a highly dubious joke in there somewhere, but I'm not quite sure where – Neil). Anyway, moving swiftly on...
Number of Mega Drives in the UK: 285,000 (estimated)

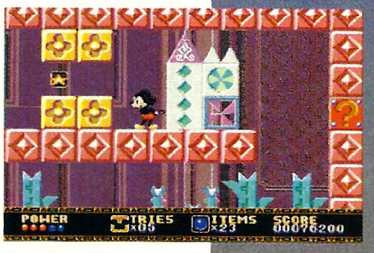
***Moonwalker* is hovering just outside MEGA's Top 100 games**

MAY 1991

Number One Game: *Castle Of Illusion*
Number One Single: Still The Shoop Shoop Song (It's in his Kiss) by Cher
The start of an awesome summer for Sega sees the introduction of their second major piece of hardware within 12 months. The Game Gear – that small, slick and colourful little devil – is officially launched at the Monaco Grand Prix, with the *Monaco GP* cart, aiming to sell 100,000 before Christmas.

It is obviously a vicious attack on the handheld market, currently dominated by Nintendo's Game Boy. Although twice the price of Boy, the Gear boasts a colour screen.

Sega announces a £9 million advertising and marketing budget – the biggest budget yet in the game-orientated computer industry. It pays for: the "To be this good takes ages, to be this good takes Sega" ad campaign, which appears mid-month as the new "avant-garde" Sega production; Bobby Charlton's Soccer Sixes; two Sega buses; and more promotions than you could wave a light phaser at. This all goes to help fuel the phenomena that's being described as a console explosion.
Number of Mega Drives in UK: 300,000 (estimated)



***Castle of Illusion* holds the number 24 position in MEGA's Top 100 games**

JUNE 1991

Number One Game: *Strider*
Number One Single: I Wanna Sex You Up by Colour me Badd
James Pond emerges from EA as the first ever Mega Drive game to be completely designed and programmed in the UK. Nowadays, most games from Virgin Games, US Gold or Flying Edge and some of the (less sporty) games from EA are "Made In Britain" courtesy of Britain being home to some of the finest programming teams in the world.

Of course, now it seems that most of our decent talents are being paid huge amounts of money to work in the US of A. Shame, but there's the world economy for you.
Number of Mega Drives in the UK: 315,000 (estimated)

JULY 1991

Number One Game: *Sonic The Hedgehog*
Number One Single: Any Dream Will Do by Jason Donovan
With the Mega Drive gagging for an identifiable character (like Alex Kidd or Wonderboy on the Master System) and more importantly a brand character to compete with Nintendo's Mario, Sega unleash Sonic.

Sonic The Hedgehog is the result of three years of secret work by Sega's top programmers and designers. The results are heart-stopping: the fastest, most colourful and most entertaining roller-coaster game ever. New standards of cartoon graphics with incredible attention to detail wow the world. Not even David Coleman superlatives can do the spikey blue and white blur enough justice – it's a stonkin' game.

Philip Ley (Sega's Marketing Director) feels the secret to *Sonic's* success is the game's character: "Sonic's attitude in the game makes him cult – he's the James Dean of hedgehogs".
Number of Mega Drives in the UK: 330,000 (estimated)

***Sonic The Hedgehog* holds the number nine slot in MEGA's Top 100**

AUGUST 1991

Number One Game: *Sword Of Vermillion*
Number One Single: (Everything I do) I Do It For You by Bryan Adams
In the States, Sega USA unveil a new batch of Mega Drive games due for release over the following year: *Toe Jam & Earl*, *Decap Attack* and *Quackshot* spearhead Sega's determined drive to get the 16-bit market sewn up before Nintendo muscle in with the SNES.

Meanwhile, the Sega buses keep on rolling round the UK in the hunt for 1992's Sega European games-playing Champion, after Danny Curley wiped the floor with the 1991 finalists in Monaco.
Number of Mega Drives in UK: 335,000 (estimated)

SEPTEMBER 1991

Number One Game: *EA Hockey*
Number One Single: Brian Adams

Sega buy out their distributing company Virgin Mastertronic (previously owned by Virgin Communications Ltd), who had been basically running Sega's operations in the UK. Cue a line of corporate business politics: Virgin feel they can't justify enormous advertising budgets on Sega stuff, and are looking for short-term gain, because hey, who knows when Sega will want all their business back for themselves. Sega, of course, are looking to build a long-term brand name, and so controlling the distribution of their games and games systems around Europe, as well as directly deciding when and what games to release is essential.

***EA Hockey/NHLPA Hockey* are at number three in MEGA's Top 100**

Part of this new regime was a new wave of TV ads. So, a certain character named Jimmy is employed. Jimmy is cool, Jimmy is sharp and Jimmy talks Gamespeak – he has the desired Sega street cred. To get this right, Sega get in gameheads to go over their ad scripts – this is how they come up with classics like, "Give me the cybo-razor cut." Adults don't understand, because the ads are just too target specific.

But, on a mission from God to make sure everyone in Britain knows the pleasures of Sega, the marketing team also join forces with Philip Schofield (again), Gopher and the fruity drink Five Alive. For the last quarter of the year everyone drinks the stuff like it's going out of fashion in an attempt to win one of their give-away Game Gears.

Number of Mega Drives in the UK: 340,000 (estimated)

OCTOBER 1991

Number One Game: *Road Rash*
Number One Single: Still Brian bloody Adams

Following exciting rumours that they will totally transform console gaming, Sega Japan announce details of their "wonder machines", the new CD-ROM and Teradrive.

The Mega CD is now (finally) to be launched in the new year, but the Teradrive (offering business users a machine capable of running Mega Drive games as well as serious IBM PC compatible software – stupid: why not just buy two separate machines?) is not pencilled in for a launch in the UK.

***Road Rash* holds the number ten position in MEGA's Top 100 games**

October also marks the start of an epic debate within the industry – to rent or not to rent? Renting had always seemed such a good idea. For Sega, it gives more people the opportunity to play their games and for the punters, well, it gives them the chance to make sure they don't waste thirty-odd hard scrounged notes on a large gobbling bird you munch at Christmas.

Sega, however, argue that they have to support their pals the retailers, who feel that they are loosing business to the rental shops. So, Sega enforce the copyright laws, making it illegal to rent out a Sega title, despite figures from the American mag Electronic Gaming Monthly indicating that 78.7% of people said they would "definitely buy a good game after renting it". This issue remains hot for the rest of 1991.

Number of Mega Drives in the UK: 370,000 (estimated)

NOVEMBER 1991

Number One Game: *Fantasia*
Number One Single: Dizzy by Vic Reeves

Sega's "Time Travellor" (supposedly) holographic coin-op arrives in the arcades. Is this really the future of video gaming? Well, if the coin-ops performance is anything to go by, then no, unfortunately not.

***Fantasia* was disappointing, but *Quackshot* more than made up for it**

The gameplay was the watch-wait-hit-button-at-relevant-moment style, while the 3D graphics failed to deliver. Unfortunately, gamesplayers couldn't really return to their Mega Drive for new inspiration – *Fantasia*, the eagerly awaited follow-up to *Castle Of Illusion*, also failed to deliver the gameplay goods. Not a good month for Sega games-wise, so let's move swiftly on to December.

Number of Mega Drives in the UK: 400,000 (estimated)

DECEMBER 1991

Number One Game: *Phantasy Star 3*
Number One Single: Bohemian Rhapsody by Queen

The ambitious target of one million Sega users by the end of '91 is reached. 130,000 Game Gears have been sold since May, and 700,000 Master System units and 315,000 Mega Drives have been sold in just over twelve months. This milestone comes in part from the buy-out of Virgin, which allows Sega to pump the market even more.

***Phantasy Star 3* holds the number 14 position in MEGA's Top 100 games**

With the Mega Drive setting new standards in speed and graphics, and the Mega CD set to blow our minds, people speculate on the future of the Master System.

Number of Mega Drives in the UK: 440,000 (estimated)

JANUARY 1992

Number One Game: *Streets Of Rage*
Number One Single: Goodnight Girl by Wet Wet Wet

In January '92, Sega do a U-turn. Renting is made legal again, as long as video shops shell out 400 quid for a Sega licence. Yaroo.

***Street Of Rage* holds the number seven position in MEGA's Top 100**

Meanwhile, the first series of Gamesmaster is announced and Neil's given the job of resident Mega Drive expert – television will never be the same again.

Number of Mega Drives in the UK: 500,000 (estimated)

FEBRUARY 1992

Number One Game: Toe Jam & Earl
Number One Single: Stay by Shakespeare's Sister

Sega Japan's director general, Kuminasa Yagi, goes on the record with Sega Europe's plans for 1992 with an accuracy of foresight not seen since the captain of the Titanic announced, "So we've run out of ice in the bar? Well have no fear, I have a cunning plan... ". What Kuminasi Yagi actually said was, "At the launch of the Mega CD in the autumn, there will already be seven titles available". We all hoped it was true, but (as we now know) things didn't quite turn out as expected. Still, let's be positive, and look forward to January of next year. Onwards...

Number of Mega Drives in the UK: 530,000 (estimated)

FEATURE

MARCH 1992

Number One Game: *Quackshot*
Number One Single: Stay by Shakespeare's Sister
Robert Maxwell sinks and takes Mirrorsoft (aka Image Works – the Sega publishers originally responsible for *Speedball 2*, *Back To The Future 2/3* and *Xenon 2*, most of which have now been republished through Virgin Games) with him. In a time of rapid expansion in the console world, this is the first real casualty.

For every yin, there is a yang, however, and Acclaim (aka Flying Edge) leap into the Sega pond to take Image Works' place.
Number of Mega Drives in the UK: 560,000 (estimated)

***Quackshot* holds the number eight position in MEGA's Top 100**

APRIL 1992

Number One Game: *Desert Strike*
Number One Single: Deeply Dippy by Right Said Fred
Sega Europe is acknowledged as top of the heap video game console manufacturer at the bi-annual European Computer Trade Show in London. *Sonic The Hedgehog* wins the title of Best Video Game as well as the Going Live Viewers Phone-In award for Video Game of the Year. Going Live received 42,000 votes – its record for calls received in one show.

Desert Strike comes out this month, a high-action, high-excitement chopper game, with direct reference to the Gulf War – politically incorrect, but a thumping good blast none the less.
Number of Mega Drives in the UK: 590,000 (estimated)

***Desert Strike* holds the number 17 position in MEGA's Top 100 games**

MAY 1992

Number One Game: *Kid Chameleon*
Number One Single: Please Don't Go by KWS
Sega's and JVC's brainchild, the Wondermega, is launched in Japan. Basically, it's just a Mega Drive and Mega CD combined. The machine sells at a cost of £365 – strangely more than the combined price of the two component items, but there you go. Still no news of a UK launch, but the Wondermega's mascot hero game *Wonderdog* is reviewed in this very issue of MEGA on page 54.
Number of Mega Drives in the UK: 620,000 (estimated)

JUNE 1992

Number One Game: *Euro Club Soccer*
Number One Single: Abba-esque by Erasure
Sonic is the tournament mascot for ITV's coverage of the European Football Championships, and the ad campaign is rumoured to cost £2 million. As sponsors, Sega get start, end and ad- break credits.

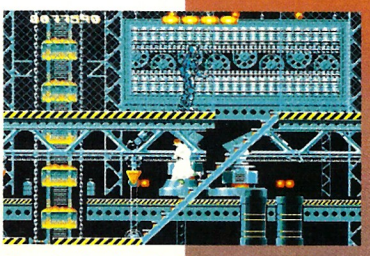
This is the biggest boost to the company since Michael Jackson gave his support, and it shows Sega as the all-round entertainers they want to be in the future. England are given Game Gears before they go to Malmo. They obviously spend too much time playing them, because they lose to bloody Sweden in the quarters.

Super Monaco GP 2 improves on the seemingly unimprovable original *Super Monaco GP* with the help of Ayrton Senna. The graphics are cranked up from superb to, er, um, another word that means so good it's beyond belief, and the gameplay is finely tuned, improving the car's handling without dropping the challenge. Britain gets one month of decent weather until the traditional summer-long downpour begins.
Number of Mega Drives in the UK: 650,000 (estimated)
(The estimated user base for 1992 is: 8-bit – 1.1 million, 16-bit – 965,000 and hand-held – 405,000)

JULY 1992

Number One Game: *Terminator*
Number One Single: Ain't No Doubt by Jimmy Nail
The Sega European games playing finals are fought out in London. The first prize of a Mega CD and a trip to Barcelona to see the Olympics eventually goes to Rezo Abdolali of Germany.

Meanwhile, in the USA the price of a Genesis (Mega Drive) drops to just $129 (that's about £75) as the price war between Sega and Nintendo escalates. UK gamers hoped the war would spread to other territories, but there was no such movement.
Number of Mega Drives in the UK: 680,000 (estimated)



***Terminator* holds the number 41 position in MEGA's Top 100**

AUGUST 1992

Number One Game: *Olympic Gold*
Number One Single: Rhythm Is A Dancer by Snap
Sega release a range of budget games priced at just £19.99. These games are all ancient back-catalogue titles re-released with a far more realistic price tag. Although *Super Hang-On* is the only budget cart that could possibly be described as any good, we look forward to more such titles in the future (the complete range of budget titles were reviewed in issue one of MEGA. Back issues are available – see page 93).

Meanwhile, joypads the world over are hammered through desks in pursuit of Olympic glory courtesy of US Gold.
Number of Mega Drives in the UK: 750,000 (estimated)

SEPTEMBER 1992

Number One Game: *Alien 3*
Number One Single: Eberneezer Goode by the Shamen
MEGA arrives! Hooray. There's still no news of a Mega CD UK launch.

MTV starts broadcasting video game news as well as music (Sonic killed Rock 'n' Roll – it's official), while ITV viewers find it hard to keep their eyes open for longer than 30 seconds without seeing yet another Sega advertisement.
Number of Mega Drives in the UK: 800,000 (estimated)

OCTOBER 1992

Number One Game: *LHX Attack Chopper*
Number One Single: End Of The Road by Boys To Men
Labour MP Nigel Griffiths campaigns for cheaper cart prices. *Sonic 2* is unveiled to the specialist press (that's us lot) for the first time, and we dutifully report back to you lot that the little blue hedgehog's never looked in better shape.

There's still no sign of a fully-operational Mega CD game that does the machine's specifications justice, but there are enough quality Mega Drive releases to keep everyone happy.
Number of Mega Drives in the UK: 850,000 (estimated)

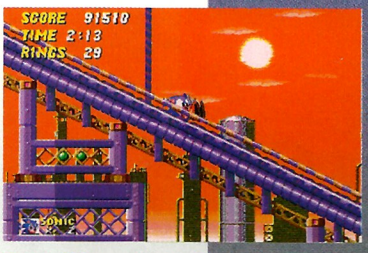
NOVEMBER 1992

Number One Game: *Sonic 2*
Number One Single: God knows, probably Cliff Richard in time for Christmas
The Mega CD's launch is postponed to 1993 (two reasons: there's not enough decent games ready yet and secondly, *Sonic 2* is generating all the media profile Sega need – far better keep some marketing powder dry for 1993), although a steady trickle of mediocre titles are continuously being imported from Japan and the USA.

Figures are released which announce that Sega hold a 59% market share in the UK console business (Nintendo obviously hold second place with 39%). Business looks just great, thank you very much. Sega reveal their goal to have sold over one million Mega Drives by January '93 – next stop, world domination.

The Future Entertainment Show gives everyone the video game experience of a lifetime, and the console scene never looked rosier.

And, err... that's it. Read on for a taste of what's to come in 1993 and here's to the future – and many more happy years of Mega Drive video gaming.
Number of Mega Drives in the UK: 900,000 (estimated)



***Sonic 2* has stormed into the number two position in MEGA's Top 100**

LOOKING AHEAD...

In future issues of MEGA you can be sure of reading up-to-the-minute news on any further Sega developments. We'll keep you posted on the launch of the Mega CD (a release date is now set for March – see MEGA CITY starting on page 6 for the latest news), as well as falling cart prices (we're forever hopeful), and much, much more.

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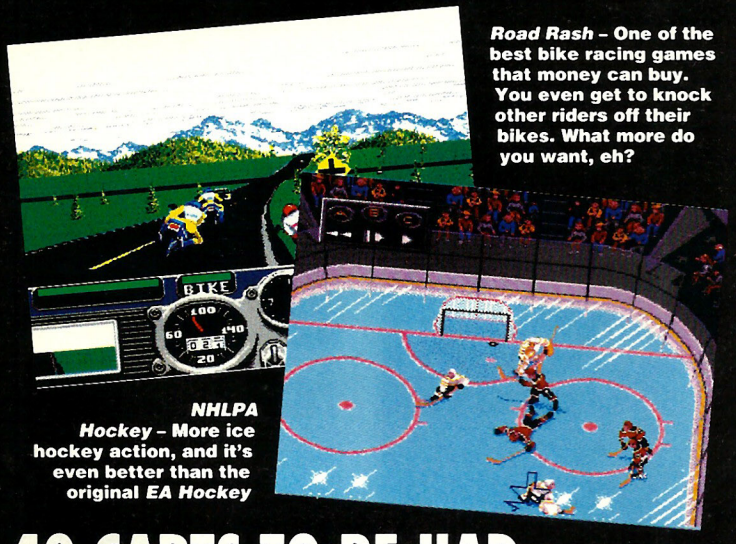
COMPETITION

The release of *John Madden '93* from EASN should be celebrated with a pretty impressive competition... so here it is!



***Road Rash* – One of the best bike racing games that money can buy. You even get to knock other riders off their bikes. What more do you want, eh?**

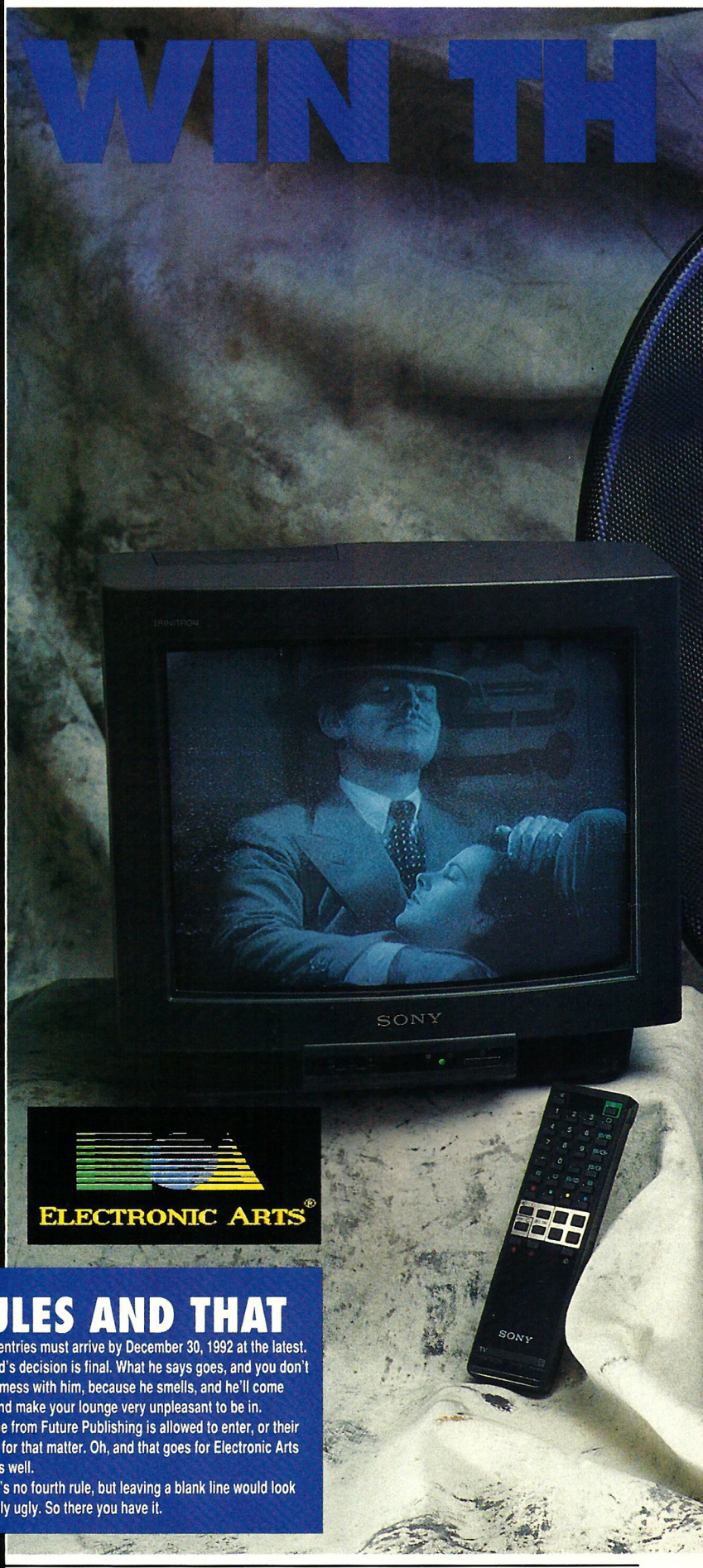
NHLPA Hockey* – More ice hockey action, and it's even better than the original *EA Hockey

40 CARTS TO BE HAD

With the imminent release of *John Madden '93*, we wondered what the most appropriate prize would be. Of course, ideally it would be tickets to go to see the Superbowl, but unfortunately it's a bit too late to organise such a trip for next year. The very next best thing would have to be something that enables you to see as much American Footy as you can stomach, and that of course is a satellite TV set up. So, with the help of EASN we've gone the whole hog on this one. You could win a TV, a satellite decoder and dish, and a video recorder.

With this lot you'll be able to follow the progress of next year's Superbowl from start to bally finish. And, as well as this kit, we're also giving away 40 runner up prizes in the shape of a copy of the EASN game of your choice. Racing fans could opt for *Lotus Turbo Challenge* or *Road Rash*, Footy fans could go for *John Madden*, or you could go for *NHLPA Hockey*, *Desert Strike* or one of a whole host of classic titles.

All you have to do is jot the answers to these three questions on a postcard and send them to:
"I want a bloody great ugly satellite dish destroying the charm of my house" Compo, P O Box 10, Sunderland, SR4 6SN.
① WHO WERE THE TWO FINALISTS IN LAST YEAR'S SUPERBOWL?
② WHICH OF THE TWO TEAMS WON?
③ WHAT WAS THE SCORE?
(Write your name, age and address on the postcard and "NO" if you don't wish to receive direct mail from selected companies)



RULES AND THAT

1. Your entries must arrive by December 30, 1992 at the latest.
2. The ed's decision is final. What he says goes, and you don't want to mess with him, because he smells, and he'll come round and make your lounge very unpleasant to be in.
3. No one from Future Publishing is allowed to enter, or their families for that matter. Oh, and that goes for Electronic Arts peeps as well.
4. There's no fourth rule, but leaving a blank line would look incredibly ugly. So there you have it.

IS LOT...

If you want the best in TV entertainment, you have to have a Sony. This 14" marvel has a black trinitron FST (Flatter Squarer Tube). Apparently it has a Pan Focus Gun (good lord!), a sleep timer, which turns it off if you nod off, a remote control, and both A/V and SCART sockets. Wowzer!

Although it isn't on this little picture here, you'll be getting a free satellite dish as well as the decoder. Bung the dish on the wall, power up this little box of tricks, and you'll be able to flick between 99 channels of quality stereo television: sports channels, movies and so much news, you'll barf. Hurrah!

Well, it's a video, isn't it? But it's a Sony one, and rather than list all those tedious specifications, let's just say that it does everything a video should – it records, it plays back, it's programmable, and it has a remote control. Any more waffling than that would be utterly boring. Triff!

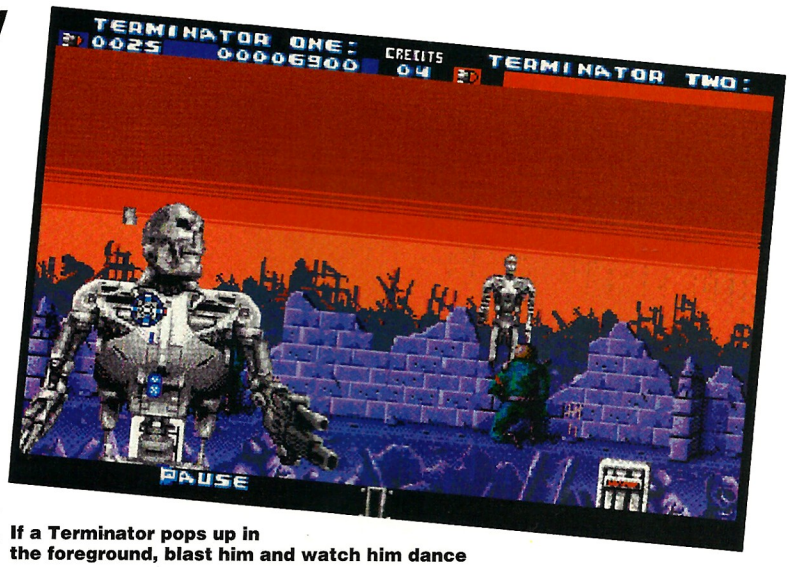
What on earth is this? Are we desperate to fill space, or what? Um... this, er, appears to be a handset. Look, it has lots of buttons. It sort of sits around on your settee so you never have to leave your chair to operate all the luvverly gear you're going to win. Groovesome, isn't it?

Using his fantastic chrono-spectacles, Andy Dyer can see the future. So, does he use them to make wads of cash? No, the berk just takes a look at new Sega games

TERMINATOR 2

Arena • December

This bit of wibbly text introduces the preview below, so here goes... oh, it's already full



If a Terminator pops up in the foreground, blast him and watch him dance

Ah yes, the romantic story of boy-from-future meets girl, gets her pregnant, gives birth to child who becomes leader of resistance in future war, sends back own father to protect mother from Terminator, then sends second Terminator back to protect son from other Termina... No that's not right. He send his mother's aunt... um.

Ah well, whatever. Needless to say this outrageously confusing story makes a rattlingly good plot for a cracking shoot-'em-up. That's why the splendid chaps from Arena (One of Acclaim's "other" labels) have converted the Arcade version of *T2* to the Mega Drive. The arcade game had one of those massive Uzi light guns on it so it comes as no surprise that the Mega Drive game can be used with the Menacer. If, however, you don't own one, you play the game using an on-screen cross-hair.

READY FOR THE BIG PUSH

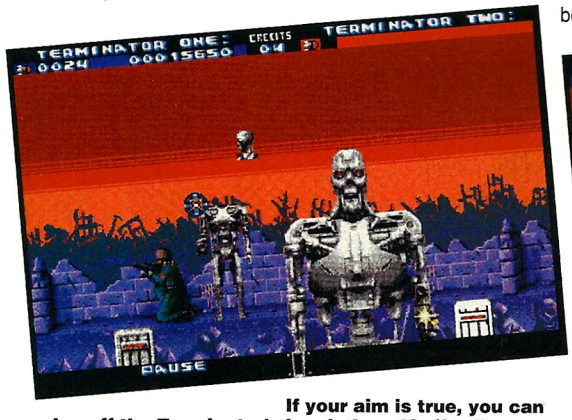
Straight into level one, and the Resistance are hard at work battling the machines. There are only a few resistance fighters and a whole heap of machines, so the trick is to frantically blast the enemy while trying not to hit any allies. You can tell which are which because the allies wear green and the enemy are silver and er, not human. Simple – a quick blast through to the end of the level and defeat the guardian.

EAT THIS, FOUL ROBOTS

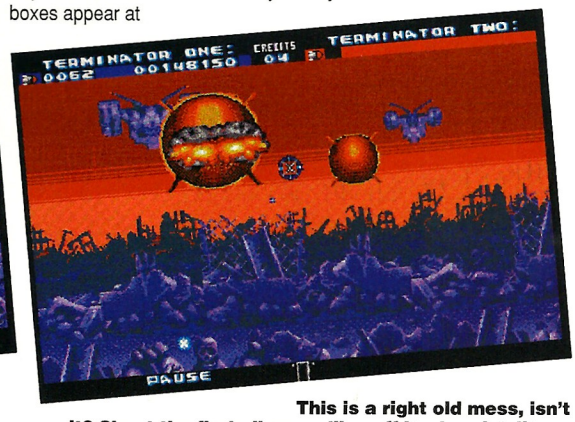
Level two takes us inside Skynet, where again you have to avoid the civilians while killing all the Terminators. This really is a piece of cake. And while there's a lull in the action, now's as good a time as any to mention the other features in the game.

There are power-ups to be collected, and these can be obtained in a number of ways. Little silver boxes appear at the bottom of the screen. Shoot them once and a power up appears, shoot the power up and it is collected. Also, shooting certain bits of scenery (like lamps and crates) will reveal collectibles occasionally. This is all just as well, because your gun only has a limited amount of power. When you first start, it fires about thirty billion rounds per second. Keep firing it all the time though and it soon weakens and ends up performing more like a pea-shooter than a state of the art piece of military hardware.

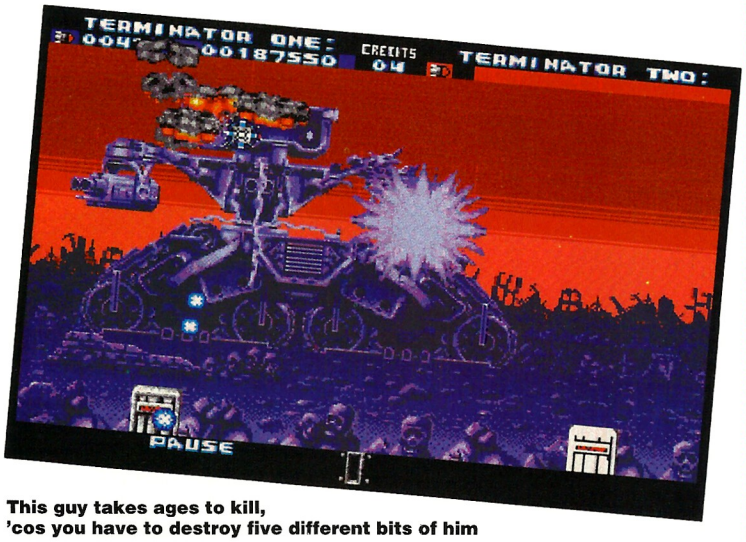
Another interesting feature is the simultaneous two-player option (just like in the arcades). When using the joypads, two cross-hairs appear on the screen, but quite how it will work with the Menacer we don't know yet. Maybe it'll



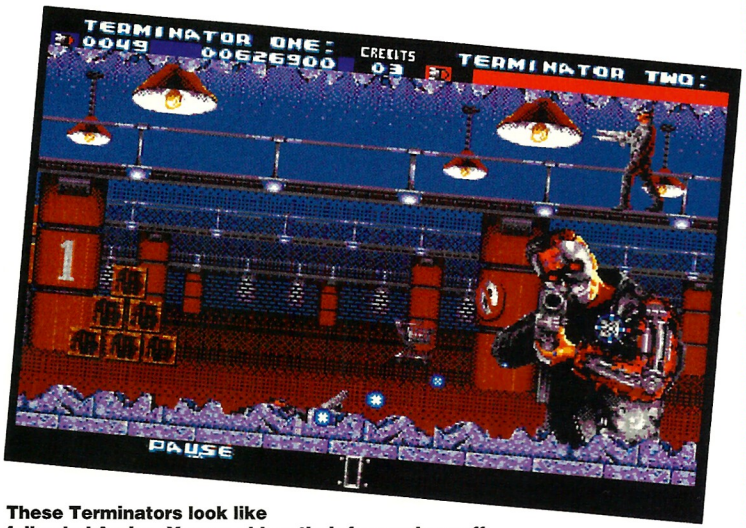
If your aim is true, you can lop off the Terminator's head, thus. (Guffaw!)



This is a right old mess, isn't it? Shoot the fireball or you'll snuff it, sharpish like



This guy takes ages to kill, 'cos you have to destroy five different bits of him



These Terminators look like fully clad Arnies. You can blow their faces clean off

Level three – the one that had us beat. Protect John Conner's truck if you can

use one Menacer and one joypad, maybe it'll support two Menacers. Who knows?

ER... HEEEEELP!

Now John Conner (leader of the resistance) jumps into a truck and you have to shoot all the attacking Terminators and ships so that he can get away. Unlike the first two levels, this is bloody impossible and at the time of going to press we couldn't get past this bit. Sadly then, this is where our preview must end. But don't worry, next month we'll have the full review for you and we'll also be fully testing it with the Menacer to let you now if it's any cop. It's looking fairly impressive at the moment, but to find out for sure, tune in next month. (Cue crap Arnie related joke...) We'll be back!

NOVEMBER

Mystical Fighter – Dreamworks

Romance Of The Three Kingdoms 2 – Koei

This RPG, which is about invading and controlling China, has already been out on the SNES. Betcha can't wait for it to reach the Mega Drive.

Breach – Treco

Death Duel – Razorsoft

More guts and gore from those very sick people at Razorsoft. Take on future cyborgs in a fight to the death.

Gemfire – Koei

Sorcerer's Kingdom – Treco

Chase HQ II (Super HQ) – Taito

The same gameplay as *Chase HQ*, but you've got a gun with which to help you pull over speeding offenders.

Crying – Sega

The Japanese version of *Bio-Hazard Battle,* a game which is reviewed on page 40 of this issue of MEGA.

Metal Fang – JVC

A super sprint game with futuristic racing cars. Race or die!

Black Hole Assault (CD) – Bignet

A CD beat-'em-up and the follow up to the appalling, *Heavy Nova.*

Keeper Of The Gates (CD) – Razorsoft

The sequel to *Stormlord.* This time you can expect a lot more gory platform action.

Monopoly – Parker Brothers

The best-selling board game of all time gets converted to your Mega Drive.

Uncharted Waters – Koei

Ninja Gaiden – Sega

Mr Gaiden finally makes it to the Mega Drive for some more platform, beat-'em-up action.

Junkers High – Sims

Another driving game set in the future, along the lines of *Chase HQ* but with big bells on.

WWF Wrestlemania – Acclaim

Get to grips with the stars from the WWF in the ring and in your face.

Land Stalker – Sega

Sega technology gets bigger, the first 16 Mbit cart full to the brim with role-playing action.

Dark Wizard (CD)

Another CD RPG, with some astounding music and a very long intro sequence featuring real actors.

Nobunga And His Ninja Force (CD) – Compile

Here they come. Hot on the heels of *Sol-Feace* comes another shoot-'em-up. This one is looking pretty spectacular though.

Rampart – Tengen

Another coin-op conversion. Strategy action and arcade skill both play a part in this Middle Ages war game.

Afterburner III – Sega

The more we see of this game, the more we think it's going to knock the socks off every other Mega CD game.

Power Wrestler (Deadly Moves – USA) – Kaneko

This game, which is similar to *Streetfighter II*, could be what Mega Drive owners have been waiting for.

G-LOC – Sega

Get behind a state-of-the-art fighter and blow up the enemy. What more could you want from a game?

Turn Over

PREVIEWS

The Secret Of Monkey Island (CD) – Victor/JVC
A funny RPG (surely not?) and a good one too (nope, sorry, don't believe you).

American Gladiators – GameTek
Everyone is going ape over the English version on your telly. Now you can play the American version on your Mega Drive.

Chessmaster – Mindscape
Chess for everyone – from complete novices to true chessmasters.

Ex-Mutants – Sage's Creation
Mutants on your Mega Drive. This is a direct rip-off of the American X-Men, very comic-style and very platformy.

Hook (CD) – Sony
The CD version of this film tie-in platform game should feature some sampled bits of the film to spruce up the action.

Hook – Sony Imagesoft
It's film tie-in time and you can expect the cart version of the sequel to Peter Pan to be very similar to the CD game, but without the sound.

King's Quest 5 (CD) – Sierra
Take control of King Graham as he fights the forces of evil – a very nice looking and atmospheric PC game, that should be great on the CD.

Tale Spin – Sega
Yeah, I'm the king of the swingers in this platform game, which stars Baloo from the Disney film, Jungle Book.

The Third World War (CD) – Bignet
Fancy trying to stop WWIII? Well, check out this very intense strategy game then.

Trouble Shooter – Vic Tokai
The Genesis version of *Battle Mania*. Not very exciting and all that, but they are making some changes to the game.

WWF

Arena • December

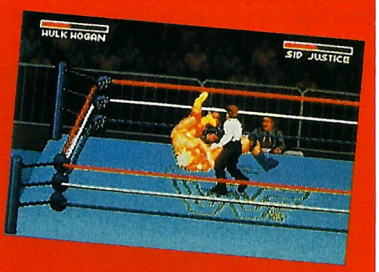
Those blubbery blokes from the US of A are about to hit the Mega Drive

It's pathetic, isn't it? Grown men playing pat-a-cake in tights

Who would have thought that such a ridiculous sport could become so popular? But not only do people watch WWF in their thousands, the series of games released by Acclaim have also proved incredibly popular (at least on the Nintendo systems).

Now the chaps at Acclaim have to address the more discerning Sega playing population. It must be said that the NES wrestling games were a bit of a disappointment, but (pained though we are to admit it) the SNES version was actually a lot of fun. If the Mega Drive is as good, then we should be in for many evenings of comedy costumes and hurtling fatties and most important of all, great whoops of laughter.

Yes indeed, potentially, wrestling on the Mega Drive could be a lot of fun. As long as the gameplay has been retained (the graphics are certainly looking all right if these screenshots are anything to go by), then we could be in for a treat.



Not quite sure what's going on here, but it is looking good

UNIVERSAL SOLDIER

Ballistic • November

A Dolph in *Turrican's* clothing would be one way to describe this

Hold up, I hear you cry, "That game looks awfully like *Turrican 2*!" And, of course, you'd be right. Now I'm not saying this is exactly how it happened, but maybe the cleaner at Accolade was sorting out their filing cabinet and suddenly cried, "Can I throw this old Turrican game and this shortly to be out of date film licence away then, or what?"

"Yes, go ahead," came the reply. "No wait, we'll just change the graphics, mess around with the layout a bit then change the name from *Turrican 2* to *Universal Soldier* and bung it out on all the consoles."

It may sound like a bit of a rip-off, but hey, *Turrican 2* wasn't exactly a complete flop, so who cares what the title is as long as it's good. So is it any good? Well, to find that out you'll have to read MEGA next month, when we'll have the full review. Until then, we'll describe the game a bit and show you some screenshots just to whet your appetite.

God knows what the plot of the film is, but what we have here is a platform shoot-'em-up that never lets up. It's absolutely huge and totally riddled with bad guys and guardians.

The main character has two basic weapons, a cannon and what is basically a two-way wall of death. By picking up the various power-ups to be found in the game, the cannon can be improved upon to fire in several directions at once and become more powerful. The main character can also transform into a small spiky ball, which serves several purposes. It kills enemies, lets you move around faster and enables you to enter corridors that would otherwise be inaccessible.

So there you go. If you want to know any more, come back next month for the full review.

Sorted!

Here's *Turrican* in acti... No, here's *Universal Soldier* in action

Championship Pro Am – Tradewest
Here's more off-the-wall car racing action from the people who made *Super-Off-Road* for the Nintendo.

Micro Machines – Code Masters
Great on the 8-bit NES, this crazy scaled down racing game is looking even better on the Mega Drive.

Jerry Glanvillies Pigskin Football – Razorsoft
The coach of the Atlanta Falcons puts his name and expertise behind another American Football game.

Chester Cheetah – Kaneko
The cheetah with his own brand of crips(?) ends up with his own Mega Drive game.

Chakan: The Forever Man – Sega
A sinister title backs up this even more sinister-looking platform game.

Super Battle Tank – Absolute
Another SNES to Mega Drive conversion. This time it's a fully hands-on tank simulation.Bet you can't wait to get you hands on this one?

Outlander – Mindscape

Sewer Shark (CD) – Sony

Battle Toads – Tradewest
Another Nintendo conversion, but this is a rather spiffing platform-cum-shooting-cum-beat-'em-up game

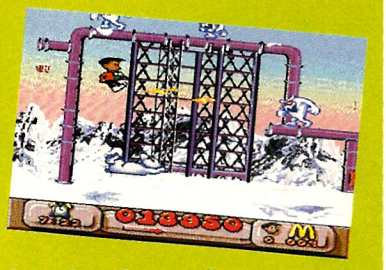
Shadow Of The Beast 2 – Electronic Arts
More incredibly realistic graphics and platform action from Psygnosis. Very similar to the original *Shadow of the Beast*, but bigger.

Flintstones
Yabba Dabba Doo, Fred, Barney, Wilma and Betty (phwoar!) appear in this cartoon related platform game.

MIC AND MAC GLOBAL GLADIATORS

Virgin • February

Ronny McDonald suddenly gets a conscience and sends two kids on a mission



Take that vile snow fiend – quick blast from your splatter gun

Mic and Mac are two young kids, one black and one white. They obviously have families who hate them, because they spend all their time in McDonalds gorging their faces with burgers and McChicken McsandMcwiches.

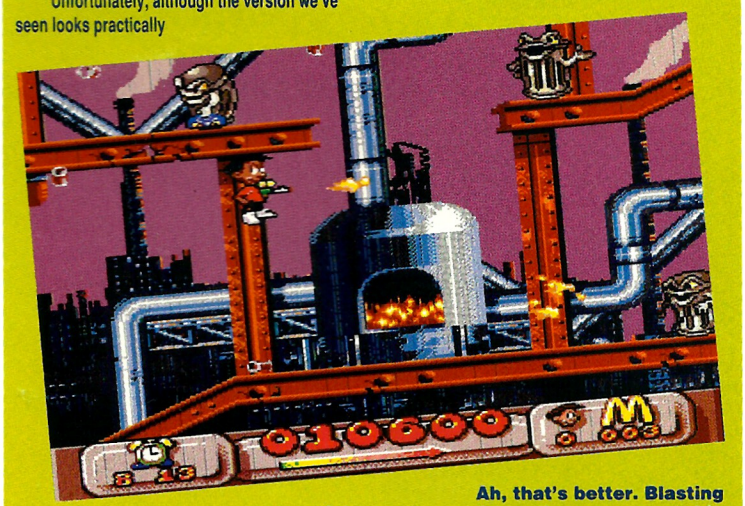
One Mcday while reading a Global Gladiators comic, that most frightening (and somehow rather perverse) of characters, Ronald McDonald appears and transports the pair into some other dimension in the roles of the Global Gladiators. For someone who's supposed to like kids, it seems rather strange to send them on a potentially deadly mission, but then I've always found Ronald McGit rather sinister anyway.

Thus we are thrust into a rather gorgeous looking platform shoot-'em-up. There are eight levels of vaguely environmentally-friendly action (basically shooting green slime) for you to get through. It must be said that the play areas are massive, stretching horizontally for miles, but also extending vertically quite a way too. So, depending on the difficulty of the finished version, there should be plenty to explore. *Global Gladiators* has been described as a sort of *Sonic* with gameplay. While this is partly true (leaping vaguely rightwards collecting McDonalds logos as opposed to rings in *Sonic*), that's really where the similarity ends. What does strike you is how slick it looks and moves. It's little details like your character recoiling after shooting his weapon that make it, at this stage, look rather promising.

Unfortunately, although the version we've seen looks practically finished, *Global Gladiators* won't be on sale until February, so we won't actually be able to bring you the review just yet. But don't worry, with luck, we'll be able to give it the full MEGA treatment in issue five. Keep your eyes peeled.

This beastie appears to be performing "The Old Bamboo"

Call me old fashioned, but blasting flowers ain't eco-friendly



Ah, that's better. Blasting stinky trash cans is much more acceptable

DECEMBER

Super Shinobi 2 – Sega
More ninja action for your Mega Drive. It's very similar to *Revenge of Shinobi (surprise, surprise)*, but it's bigger.

Final Fight (CD) – Sega
A big coin-op hit a couple of years ago, and it's bound to turn heads when it shows up on the Mega CD.

Steel Talons – Tengen
Incredible 3D graphics and helicopter attacks make for one helluva pumping game.

Road Riot 4WD – Tengen
Sort of *Road Blasters*, but with four-wheel drive cars.

Gauntlet – Tengen
One of the best four player coin-ops of all time, and Tengen are also bringing out a four-player adaptor. It should be fab.

Boogy Woogy Bowling – Viscon
Bowling on your Mega Drive. Just what we've been waiting for – strrikkkeee...

Dungeon Master: Skull Keep (CD) – JVC
Often imitated, but never bettered, this RPG is intense and realistic. It incorporates real actors and sampled screens.

Hit The Ice – Taito
A sort of coin-op conversion of *EA Hockey*, but without the realism. It's very fast and very good fun indeed.

Police Quest 3 (CD) – Sierra
More animated adventure from Sierra. This time you're a cop out to prove that justice can prevail. The game uses real images and animation.

Space Quest 4 (CD) – Sierra
Similar to *Police Quest*, but set in the future, where you must fly through space putting things right.

Stellar 7 (CD) – Sierra
Yet more spacey adventure from those boys at Sierra.

Mohammed Ali's Boxing – Virgin
From the programmers who brought you *EA Hockey* and *John Madden's American Football*, comes a boxing sim featuring the greatest boxer of all time.

Power Monger – Electronic Arts
More *Populous* related antics in this God game. Kill people, become more powerful and then kill some more people.

Cal Ripkin Baseball
Cal is a bit of a hero in the States, but over here? Sorry, never heard of him.

Amazing Tennis – Absolute
After waiting years for a tennis sim, there's no stopping them now.If you're a tennis freak, check out the preview of *Andre Agassi's Tennis* on page 28 or this issue of MEGA.

Furry Friends – Electronic Arts
Cute, and (you've guessed it) furry platform game.

Chuck Rock (CD) – Sony
These Sony guys are really pulling out the stops on the old CD, but what can they do to this game to make it worth buying if you've already got the cart version?

Roger Clemens – Flying Edge
Oh God! Another baseball game. This is getting silly. What can they add that hasn't been done already?

Humans – GameTek
Previewed last issue, this *Lemmings*-inspired game is going to take some serious head-scratching to get through.

Jeopardy – GameTek
More TV quiz show questions from the same guys who brought you *Wheel of Fortune*. (Oo-er! Can't be very good then, can it?)

Turn Over

PREVIEWS

Turtles IV: The Hyperstone Heist – Konami
The lean, green fighting machine finally makes an appearance on your, er, black console.

Sunset Riders – Konami
A bit of an ancient coin-op, but the chance to play bounty-hunting Wild West cowboys has got to be good.

Lightning Force – Sega
Don't know a lot about this, but from the title it could be a shoot-'em-up. Good guess, eh?

Toxic Crusader – Sega
The (in)famous Tromaville character battles against the forces of pollution once again.

Pro Quarterback – Tradewest
Yes, it's American Football time again. Wonder what they can do this time?

JANUARY

Ariel: The Little Mermaid – Sega
Another cute platform game using the Disney licence. Let's hope the excellent soundtrack from the film can be converted as well.

B-Bomb – Sega USA
More strange platform action from Sega, including a guest appearance from Sonic. Yes, it seems wonders will never cease.

Mega Lo Mania – Virgin
Teach your people to fight, make weapons and (best of all) make babies in this world domination simulation.

Sorcerer's Kingdom

Dolphin – Sega
Dolphin endeavours from Sega, not very inspiring I grant you, but you never know.

ANDRE AGASSI'S TENNIS

Tecmagik • December

This year's Wimbledon champ appears in his very own Mega Drive game

After winning Wimbledon's men's singles championship in 1992, you'd think André Agassi was as famous as he could get. But no, he's now reached the pinnacle of popularity, by having a Mega Drive game named after him.

André Agassi's Tennis is, surprisingly, a tennis game. It's not, however, an ordinary tennis game. In this game, you actually get to play as André himself, and get to simulate all his spectacular moves and his flamboyant personality. You even wear his garish T-Shirts.

Realistic animation, and a computer control system that plays the correct shot depending on the speed and height of the ball, the position you're standing in and the players' own strengths and weakness, means this one is going to take some time to get used to.

André Agassi's Tennis is set for a December release, and MEGA hopes to bring you an in-depth review in a forthcoming issue.

Here he is, the sexy son-of-a-gun

New balls please... any balls?

GODS

Mindscape • December (Import)

Gods is out on import soon, but why won't it be an official title?

Good God, a flip-top head. I'll be...

Three gems make the key drop

WARNING! THIS IS NOT A PREVIEW...

Nor is it a review. What did you say? Yes, yes we know it's been reviewed in other magazines, but the plain fact of the matter is that this game is not going to be released over here. And any versions that can be obtained (from America) can only be used on a genuine American Genesis, in which case, you're probably thinking, "Why bother to mention it at all then?"

Well, this is where it's at. Sega America thought the game was fine and released it over there, but when Sega Europe saw it they said something along the lines of, "This is too ploppy for the Europeans, sling your hook". So, the reason for all the magazine coverage over the last couple of months is to say, "Look Sega peeps, this is not a half bad game, why not give it a go. All these mags are raving about it, so what's the problem? After all, you don't want gamers to start relying more on grey imports do you...?" We're not reviewing it yet because if it does get released, they might change it first. Even so, it's a great little game so let's just wait and see if Sega Europe change their minds...

PGA Tour Golf 2 – Electronic Arts
The best golfing sim gets touched up, tweaked and generally made a lot nicer.

FEBRUARY

Another World – Virgin
Incredible animation and puzzle solving action make a nice change from the usual Mega Drive stuff.

Mic and Mac – Virgin
Get all eco-conscious and save the rain-forests in this two-player platform game.

Superman – Virgin
Superman doesn't take any stick, except when someone's holding a piece of Kryptonite to his face.

It's anyone's guess when these games are due out...

Terminator (CD) – Virgin

F19 – Microprose

F15 Strike Eagle 2 – Microprose

Mig 29 – Domark

Wing Commander (CD) – Sierra
The big PC game makes it over to the Mega CD and should be even better than before.

Zombie High – Electronic Arts

Seven Cities of Gold – Electronic Arts

Jester – Sega

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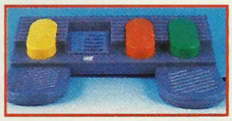

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The mega, MEGA men, they don't get up 'til ten, they work a bit, crack some jokes, then back to bed again

Each issue of MEGA is made from the juiciest tomatoes, the plumpest mushrooms, the finest mozzarella cheese and the crispiest of deep-pan pastry bases. Indeed, we at MEGA like to think of our jolly little mag as a delicious pizza containing all the finest Sega-related ingredients. Isn't that right? (Not that I'm aware of – Neil)

JOHN MADDEN '93

Who the bloody hell do they think they are? EA have had it too good for too long, so it's about time they fouled it all up. Ah well, maybe next time. They've only gone and produced the best Mega Drive game of all time, haven't they?

***Madden '93* reviewed on page 32. It's predictably brilliant**

BATMAN RETURNS

If you thought the film sequel was a disappointment, just wait until you see the game. Neil West's dander is well and truly up over this one, so he wades straight in and gives old Batters a swift kick in the Bat-plums. Turn to page 42 to see how truly awful things are.

***Batman Returns*, and everyone tries hard to stifle a yawn**

WORLD OF ILLUSION

Q. What do you call a game you can finish after one attempt. A. Crap. Well, yes, but all is not quite as disastrous as it first appears. Check out the review to see why this ain't the biggest pile of tosh ever.

Mickey and Donald in doddle shocker – page 48

WONDER DOG

The game that was written to be bundled with the WonderMega is now available separately for Mega CD owners. It looks good and plays well, but is it hard enough?

***Wonder Dog* barks into action**

DECEMBER

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RATINGS

It's the easy-to-read rating system. Take a look.

How many players can play the game at any one time?

Skill levels? Yes please. Here we tell you how many there are

How many lives are you given? And how many continues?

A game with this icon has a password system!

Even better, a game with this icon comes with battery back-up!

Sonic 2's got 20, but *EA Hockey* hasn't got any. Stages that is

Import carts are shown with one of these logos, from America or Japan

GRAPHICS 9

Five game components are rated individually out of ten. Here's what we look for in each:

GRAPHICS: Clear presentation, animation, scrolling, collision-detection, design, speed

SOUND: Music, FX, samples and speech

GAMEPLAY: Movement, control mechanism, difficulty, challenge design and fun element

GAME SIZE: How much does the game offer? Are the levels big? Is there a league option?

ADDICTION: Er, is it addictive?

"What we think of the game, be it praise or a slagging"

WHO'S WHO?

NEIL WEST

Neil used to be the Deputy Editor of Sega Power, then one day he was offered the editorship of MEGA. He hasn't looked back since. But then, that's got more to do with the fact that he seriously injured his neck moving office furniture than his new job being particularly exciting or enthralling. (Author's note: It took approximately three days to come up with that awful pun)

ANDY DYER

Andy Dyer is one seriously talented guy. He can write like no other writer. He can play video games better than any other person on the planet. In fact, he's so talented, he practically produces the whole of MEGA by himself. His favourite tasks include reviews, previews and, of course, the reviews intro page. (I think you just blew it Dyer – Neil)

PAUL MELLERICK

Paul has recently contracted the rather embarrassing nickname of Tall Smellydick. The reasons for this bizarre new monicker are threefold: a) It's humourous, because it vaguely rhymes with Paul Mellerick; b) He is indeed very tall at a lofty 6' 2"; c) He was once a private investigator at a sewage plant (Think about it. It ain't very funny, but it fills space).

AMANDA DYSON

Hrmph! Amanda got married. And sadly she married an ape. He's vast, he's scary and their union means we can no longer say things like, "Phwoar Amanda, fancy a quick shufty behind the bike sheds?" or "Amanda, come to my flat and I'll show you the time of your life with a large marrow and a jar of Hellmans," for fear of being rendered lifeless in a fashion involving much pain.

JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL '92

The best video game of all time just got better – it really is fantastic. So why isn't Paul Mellerick smiling? Well, maybe we'd better just let him explain for himself...

A nice quick touchdown for six points on the scoreboard. Now let's try for the extra point – just kick it through those two upright poles in front of you

The original was fab and the sequel was even better. In fact, the *John Madden Football* duo combine to rate as MEGA's number one game (check out the Top 100 on page 82). However, after the amazing success of the '92 version, what could EASN do to improve a game which many people believe is perfect already?

The fact is, they haven't actually done that much, other than make the whole gameplaying process a tad more atmospheric and realistic.

Now, at MEGA we review and rate each game on its own merits and not on how it compares to other games in the genre. We don't downmark a game just because it happens to be a sequel. Instead, we recommend whether it's worth upgrading to the new game if you already own the old one. So, with this in mind, let's do a quick run down of the game itself for the people who don't know anything about *John Madden American Football.*

The most atmospheric and realistic gameplay ever

FROM THE TOP

John Madden American Football is, surprisingly enough, an American Football simulation. You view the game from one end of the pitch, instead of the usual side-on TV perspective. You play the part of coach, quarterback, receiver, kicker, nose tackle, guard, or whoever you choose to control, against real opponents, who think and react to the situation in hand. You have complete control over your players, and an amazing control system enables your quarterback to pull off some brilliant moves.

All the features of American Football (complete with Superbowl-winning coach John Madden's own playbook of tactics at your disposal) make for a brill, indeed a classic, game.

It's the most absorbing, playable, profound, addictive and adrenaline-pumping game we at MEGA have ever played, so, we would confidently announce from the top of any tall building that "*John Madden Football,* in any of its forms, is an excellent game".

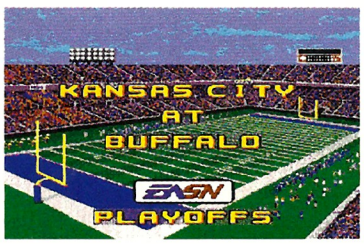
Still reading? Well, then you probably already own the original *John Madden Football* or *John Madden '92* and are wondering whether you should upgrade to the latest model, or not. Well, let's have a look, shall we?

Using the new No-Huddle option, your opponents have set up already and are about to snap the ball. Better get into position

YET MORE TEAMS

The first thing you notice about the new version is a bit of a (ahem) chubby (we're not going to be the ones to call him a fat git, oh no) John Madden screaming at you and yet another excellent Rob Hubbard soundtrack firing out from the speakers.

The most outstanding feature of *John Madden* past is the variety of teams available: each team differing from the rest



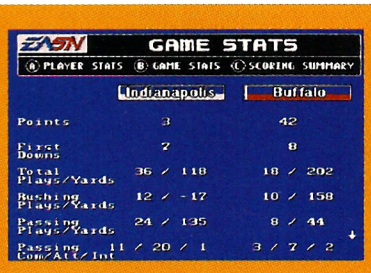
Right, we've chosen to be Buffalo. Now let's see if we can put right last year's Superbowl defeat. Go Bills, go, go, go

JOHN MADD FOOTBALL '9

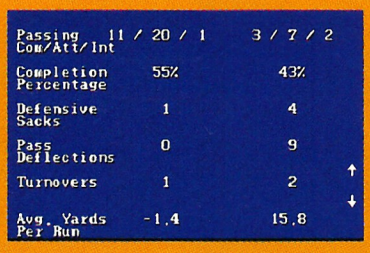
YET MORE STATS...

Stats eh! Don't you just luv 'em? Well, if you do, then you'll be pleased to know that *Madden '93* is bursting with them. Every time you play a game, you can check out how well (or badly, for that matter) you're playing.

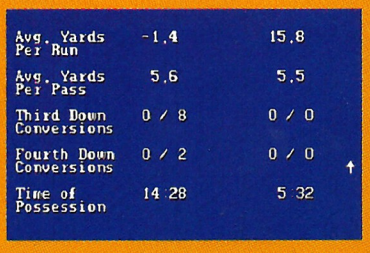
Is that quarterback doing his job? And is that new $11 million running back actually worth all that money? These questions, and many more useless ones, will be answered.



More stats mean more realism and the chance to see how good you are



You can even check out how good your quarter back and defence are too



Not to mention you can check out your offence as well

This screen doesn't really add anything to the game, but if you'd programmed it, you'd want everyone to know, wouldn't you?

right down to each player; some teams being good, some being great and some being, well let's be fair, not so good. This was always a stunning feature of the game and in *John Madden '93* there are more teams than ever before.These aren't just ordinary teams either.

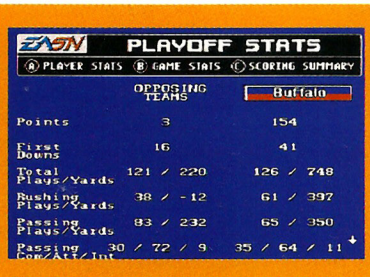
No, these are special teams (ha, special teams, get it? Sorry little American Football humour there), so special in fact, that they are the best teams in the history of American Football. These are real-life Superbowl winning teams from times past, the members of which have been pixelled down (not literally, of course) and put onto cartridge. The stonking line up includes: Chicago '85, Dallas '77, Miami '72, San Francisco '84, New York '86, Oakland '76, Pittsburgh '78 and Washington '82.

The best thing about the inclusion of these teams is that you can play them against any other team in a one-off game or even take part in a special play-off system just for these eight – a sort of play-off to find the best of best, if you like.

Another addition to the list of teams is the All-Madden Greats. The All-Madden team is still here, but it consists of the best of the normal

Turn over

EN 3



Then put them all together and see how well you've done in the play-offs

JOHN MADDEN ADDITIONS...

Check out the various sections below for a complete rundown of the changes between *John Madden '92* and the '93 version. Firstly, we show you what they are and then secondly, we tell you if they're any good or not. Or to be more precise, is there enough here which improves on the other two versions to warrant paying an extra forty quid? Go on then, read on...

MORE CHALLENGES

CHANGE: Once you've annihilated every team which *Madden's* has to offer and even out-played the All Madden team, then you've effectively completed the game.

Madden '93 hits back with eight special Superbowl winning teams and the ever beautiful All Madden Greats.

SO?: Well, more teams mean more playing time, and all these extra teams are tough. They add another dimension to the game as well as another set of play-offs. Nice one lads.

IMPROVED ANIMATION

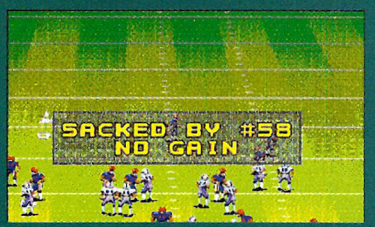
CHANGE: If you were astounded by the detailed animation in *NHLPA Hockey* in issue one of MEGA, you will be further gob-smacked by that of *John Madden '93*. Headbutts, stumbles and all manner of other quirks make for an incredibly detailed visual experience.

SO?: If a game's going to be realistic, then animation definitely takes a major playing role and *John Madden '93* has some of the best around. Now, you can laugh yourself silly when your mate thinks he's got away with a 38 yard pass, but tries to catch it one-handed, giving you enough time to run up and tackle him.

ADDITIONAL STATS

CHANGE: Stats have been with *John Madden* since its conception, but the '93 version takes them not one, not two, but several steps further. You've got stats coming out of your ears in this one and they even save up as you progress through the play-offs, so you can see how you're doing overall.

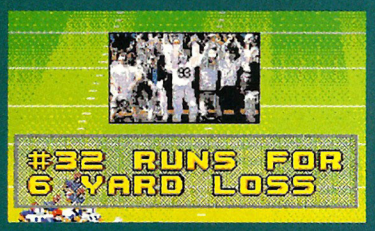
SO?: Again, the better the stats, the more realistic the game. And, with player by player breakdowns and overall stats, American Football's purists will love it. It might go over some people heads, but then if you don't like them, you can just ignore them. I mean it's not like you're being forced to read them or anything like that, is it?



SUPERIOR SPEECH

CHANGE: "Heck of a play", "Where'd that truck come from?" and " What a hit" – load up *Madden '93*, and you'll be hearing these amazing speech samples and many, many more, from Mr Madden himself.

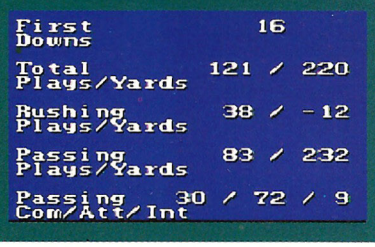
SO?: Yet again, it all adds to the realism, but it doesn't exactly add great leaps in gameplay. I mean it's nice and all that, but what's the point? You'll hear all the speech after playing about five matches and then it just becomes irritating.



STATIC SCREENS

CHANGE: Make a mistake, a good play or do something equally crap or astounding, and you can usually get a response from the crowd.

SO?: Just like the other two *Madden* games before it, the static screens makes the game nice to look at and you can always go, "Ooh, look at that lovely sampled screenshot of people cheering, isn't it great", but you won't be saying that when you've seen it for the 345th time.

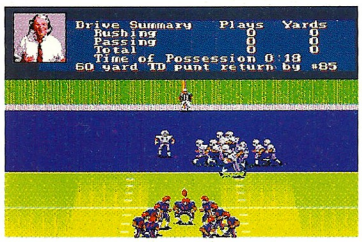


BATTERY BACK-UP

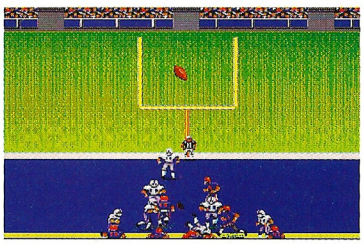
CHANGE: No more messy passwords with this baby, 'cos it's battery backed. Just play through one match, and it'll automatically save your details. Neat, huh?

SO?: A really good idea this one. The other two *Madden* games gave you a password to bring you back to where you left off, but not only does this one save your game automatically, it also saves your stats as you progress through to the final stages of the play-offs.

GAME REVIEW



Another touchdown and even more points on the board. Well done lads, I think they're beaten. Still lets try for the extra point



Yeees! Beautiful kick, straight down the middle. Let's face it, those guys couldn't prevent an extra point if their lives depended on it

teams, whereas the All-Madden Greats comprise the best of the best teams. In total, you have 38 different teams to pit your skills against and two different play-offs to conquer.

There's more animation in here than in four *Tom and Jerry* cartoons

DETAILS, DETAILS

On setting about the game, you'll uncover the same options which appear in the '92 version: quarter length (5, 10 or 15 minutes), weather conditions (fair, windy, rain or snow) and pitch type (grass or turf). Once you're happy with your set-up, play the game, man!

The next thing you'll see is the team match-up. This detail of the game is also the same as before. Each area of your team is matched against your opponents to see who comes off better, and once you've sussed out the opposition's strengths and weaknesses, you're ready to begin.

While contemplating your initial attack, however, take a look at the crowd performing its excellent Mexican Wave – a new touch to the game which will probably do no more than produce a wry smile from your good self.

Two representatives from each team then run onto the pitch and the referee tosses the coin. Choose heads or tails. If you win, choose to kick or receive. If you lose, select which end of the field you'd like to play.

GAME ON

From here on in, the only noticeable difference between this game and its two predecessors is the animation. There's more animation in here than you could shake a large pencil at: stumbling, taunting, one-handed catches, headbutts and all manner of other unsightly signs.

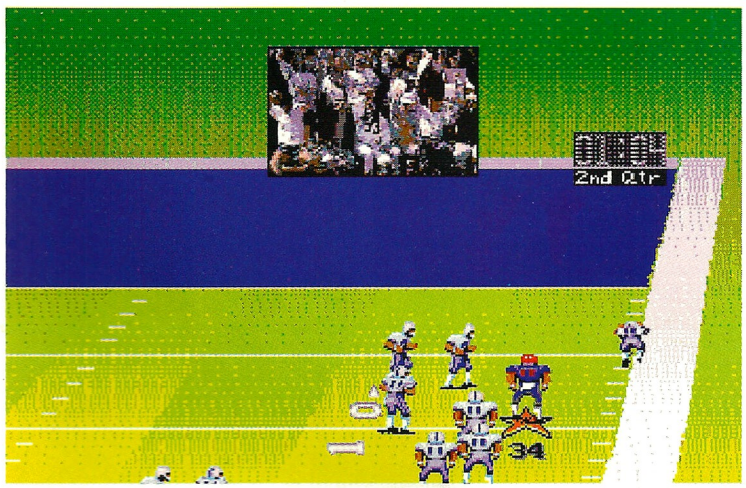
This makes the game incredibly good to look at and even tougher than ever to play. Why? Well, because if you stumble after a tackle, you're going to give your opponents more time to catch you, and if you try a one-handed catch, you've got to steady yourself before you can run on. Putting these small cosmetic changes to one side for a moment, however, there's not much difference between this and the '92 game in terms of playability. I mean, there's only one extra play – the "stop the clock" play in which the quarterback throws the ball to the floor straight after the snap and so stops the clock.

BUILT LIKE BRICK SH..., ER, SHACKS

Even though the actual size of the game hasn't changed, the computer opponents are a lot tougher than before and not just because of the improved animation. These guys have been doing some serious working out and some sprites are bigger than others. Check out the front line of the New Orleans' defence – it's awesome.

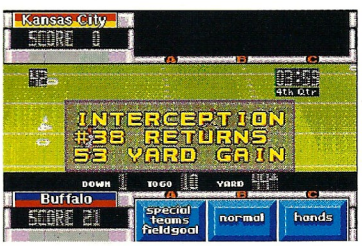
The same plays which worked in *Madden '92* still work against the opposition in *Madden '93*, things like the old Flood Right or the Up Hook. You will, however, need split-second timing to pull these off or you'll be looking at an almost certain interception, something which tends to happen a lot. (Play New England against the All-Madden Greats, and you'll be lucky if you make one accurate pass during the whole match.) Because of the shortage of any new plays, the only bit of your game strategy which you really need to work on is your accuracy rate.

This, naturally, makes for a tougher overall game, but this still shouldn't prevent most people from ultimately working their way through to the final of the play-offs and then winning.

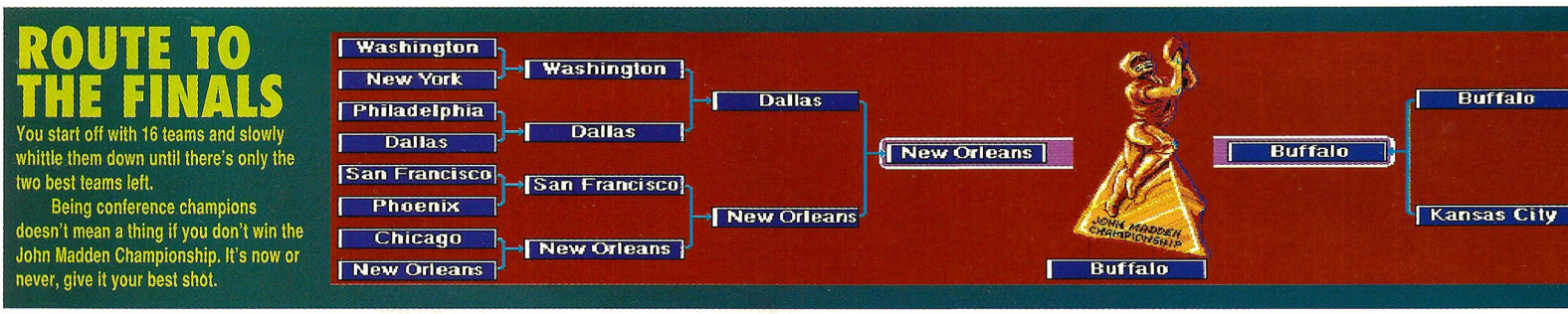


That was a nice run, and it almost got you to the end zone. The crowd liked it too... look, they're up on their feet cheering

A nice big kick-off and a reasonable return. Now all you've got to do is move 80 yards upfield and score. Couldn't be easier, huh?



Well done Buffalo, not only did you manage an interception, but you then ran it back up-field 53 yards. Whouf!



GET A GRIP!

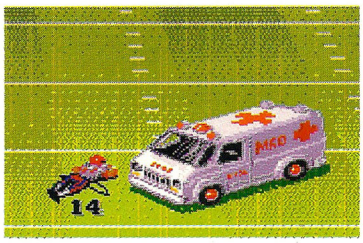
Moves your players all around the pitch or highlights a play

A Passes to player A, makes your highlighted player dive, selects your play box or calls an audible

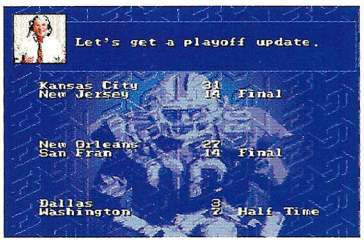
B Passes to player B, makes you spin out of a tackle if you've got possession, selects your play box or fakes a snap

C Passes to player C, gives you an extra charge when in possession, selects your play box or snaps the ball

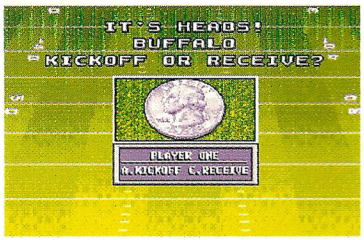
Let's try for a game of all time play offs, shall we? Yeah, I fancy Chicago '85. Come on then New York '86, do your worst



Er, my quarterback seems to have been injured. Maybe it's because I decided on a quarterback sneak through four 300lb men



It's half time and while you're taking a break, Mr Madden pops up and shows you how the other matches are going. Useful, isn't he?



One new feature is the coin toss, which decides if you're going to kick off or receive. If you win the toss, I'd receive if I were you

IN A LEAGUE OF ITS OWN?

The two-player game was probably the best way to enjoy both of the previous *John Madden* games. For its sheer head to head playability, it was a winner all the way. But could the popularity of the two-player game perhaps suggest that something was greatly lacking in single-player mode?

Ever since the original game came out, people have been screaming for a full-season league. It is somewhat surprising, therefore, that *John Madden '93* fails to deliver. We all know that it's possible (*Joe Montana 2: Sports Talk Football*, does the business very nicely), but EA have failed to deliver for a second time, and that really is rather unforgivable.

The two-player mode is just as exciting as ever, but a battery backed-up 16 team season, with full play-offs, a Superbowl final and an amazing end-sequence would have been nice, and, it has to be said, it was somewhat expected.

STILL THE BEST

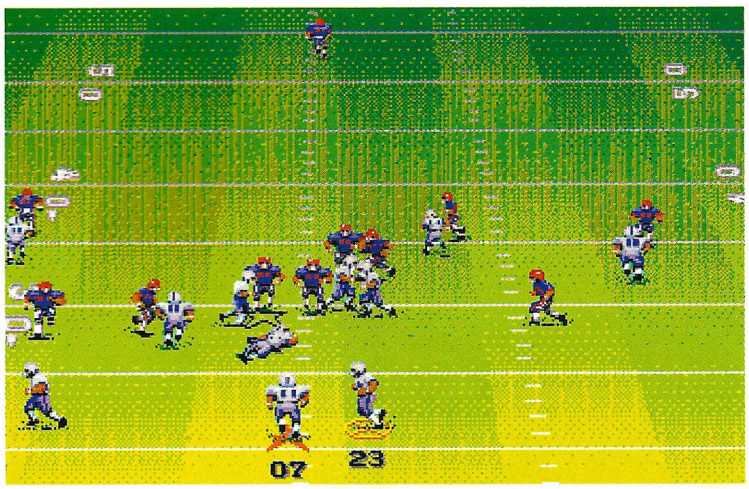
Let's summarise. Fantastic realism, great sounds and speech, adrenaline-pumping action, more stats than ever before, tense action, and all round the best game the Mega Drive has to offer. That's what *John Madden '93* is all about, but (and it's a big but) that's (almost) exactly the same as what *John Madden '92* has to offer.

If you own *John Madden '92,* or even the original *John Madden American Football* for that matter, then you should ignore this game completely, because it offers very little that's new and it doesn't improve upon the general gameplay.

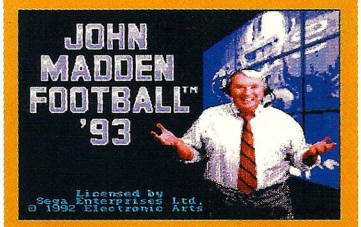
Purists will say that the '93 version is the best yet, and that everyone should go out and buy it, but in MEGA's opinion, it just isn't worth the extra forty quid. Having read this review, you may look across at the ratings and think hey, that's a bit high. But remember, the game is being rated on the basis that it is an entirely new product. It does, however, come with the highest recommendation from MEGA that you don't buy this if you already own either of the other two *Madden* games.

So why (returning to the very start of this review) am I not smiling? Well, it's probably because I was just hoping for something *genuinely* new. (Dreamer – Neil)

Ⓜ *Paul Mellerick*



The Instant Replay mode allows you to check out your last play to see what went wrong. Take heed and try not to make the same mistake again



PUBLISHER: EASN

PRICE: £39.99

RELEASE: December '92

CARTRIDGE: 8 Mbit

CONTACT: EA 0753 549442

One or two players, head to head, or co-operative

One level of skill, and 38 different teams to choose from

Lives? This is an American Football game, not a shoot-'em-up

Your last game is automatically saved by the battery back-up

Two play-off games, or as many one-off games as you like

GRAPHICS 9

SOUND 9

GAMEPLAY 10

GAME SIZE 9

ADDICTION 9

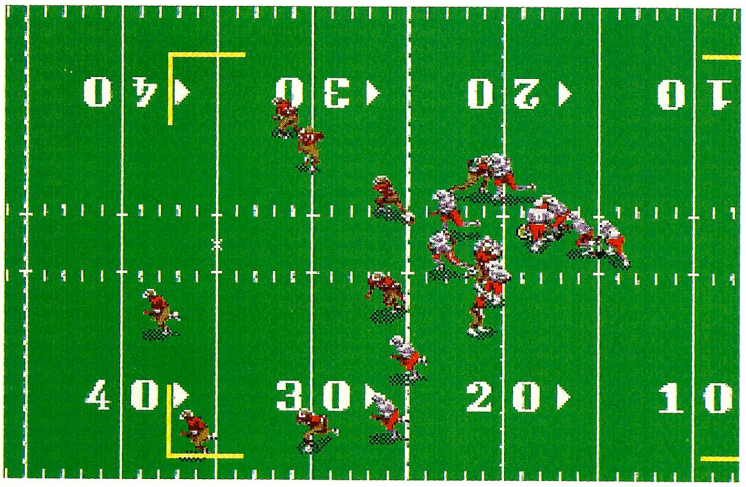
"The best game on your Mega Drive puts on some new make-up, but it's not worth the extra £40 if you've got any one of the other two"

95 PERCENT

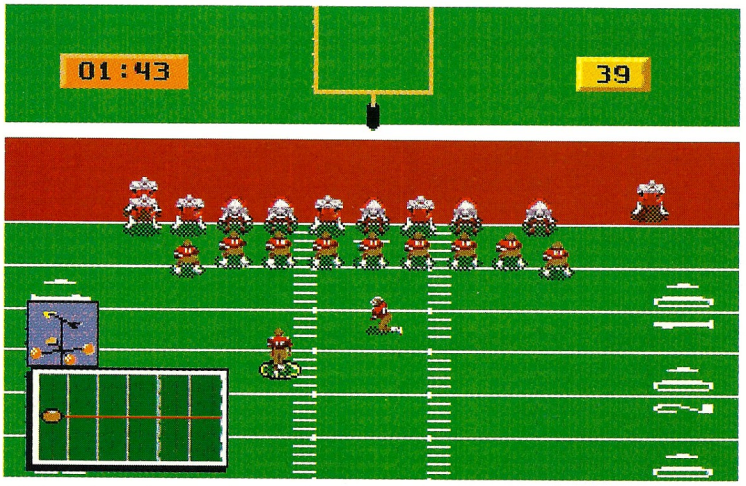
GAME REVIEW

Is it third time lucky, or will *Joe Montana* forever live in the shadow of *John Madden*? Paul Mellerick, American Football expert (or so he thinks), lines up on the 36 for his second and three, and gets intercepted

JOE



The white team have just snapped the ball and passed it to the running back. The game now goes into zoom mode, so you can see what's going on



Kicking through the posts on *Montana 3* takes some practice. Watch for the wind and hope the defence don't burst through to say hello

Sega have already tried twice to win over American Football gameplayers, but both times they've left people complaining that, "*Joe Montana's* not as good as *John Madden*". So, Sega are bravely making a third attempt. Number three will be released at the same time at *John Madden Football '93* (reviewed on the previous four pages). Can Sega pull off the coup of the century and beat Madden at his own game? MEGA has its doubts.

FIRST AND SECOND DOWN

The first *Montana* game, it has to be said, really wasn't much cop. The view was similar to that of *John Madden Football,* the control system was slightly different, but on the whole, the game failed to introduce anything new or interesting to the American Football Mega Drive game world.

Joe Montana 2: Sports Talk Football was completely different, in that it left most of the first game behind. The perspective of the pitch changed, giving you a normal TV view. Sega added a real league (something which even *Madden '93* still hasn't got) including play-offs, and the game was the first of its kind to be equipped with the Sports Talk system – a play by play guide from a real American commentator.

You can change the view of the pitch

But the game still wasn't up to much. It lacked the playability of *John Madden Football,* and all but die-hard American Football fans just didn't want to know.

Sega, therefore, decided to give it one more go. So, the best bits from both games now come together with some... er, new bits to produce *NFL Sports Talk Football: Starring Joe Montana* (to give it its full title). OK, so the name's flash but what about the game itself?

OOH ER, WHAT'S GOING ON HERE THEN?

If you're a big *John Madden* fan, then getting to grips with, and understanding *Joe Montana 3* is going to take quite some time. The control system is fiddly at first, but it is comprehensive and once you get used to it, you're sorted.

The first thing to do is to decide which type of game you want to play. If you want to, you can play a straight one-off exhibition match or, if you feel ready for it, a league. Before you get into this, however, you've got to decide how you want to play the game: do you fancy getting your hands on the whole team, or is sitting on the bench and shouting out plays more your style? If you do fancy controlling the team, but find it all a bit daunting, you can get a mate to

WHICH VIEW?

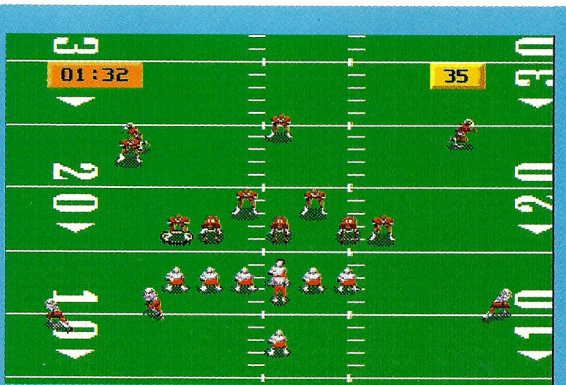
However you like to view the game, *Joe Montana 3* should be able to accommodate you. Each of the four views is completely different and also useful in its own special way. Old *Joe Montana* players can still play in the vertical mode they're used to, but they can choose whether they want to play facing up screen or down screen.

Joe Montana 2 players are also catered for, as they can use the horizontal mode. The blimp mode is absolutely useless in normal play, but for those of you out there who like to use your brains, the blimp view is best used with the coaching mode, because it lets you see what's going on. More importantly, you can see what went wrong and where.

The whole idea behind all these views, is to provide as many options as possible, and therefore make playing the game easier.

Here you are on your own 35 yard line, and the match is about to start. Good luck

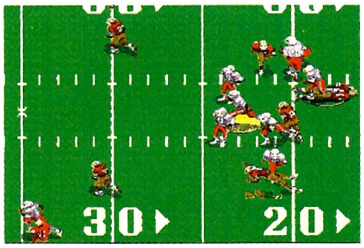
Horizontal – This view didn't work very well in *Montana 2*, and still doesn't quite work here. Judging where your players are and catching a ball relies rather more on luck than skill.



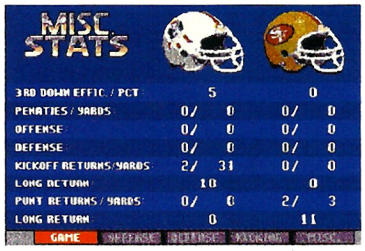
You're on defence and coming down screen. The best tactic is to pile though the middle, quickly

Vertical Defence – Choosing Vertical Defence puts your team (if you're defending) facing up the screen. If you prefer going down (as in this screenshot), you can select Vertical Offence.

MONTANA 3



Er, excuse me, but that guy with the ball needs tackling rather quickly



The stats are very comprehensive. They even break down into quarters

ER, I'M STUCK

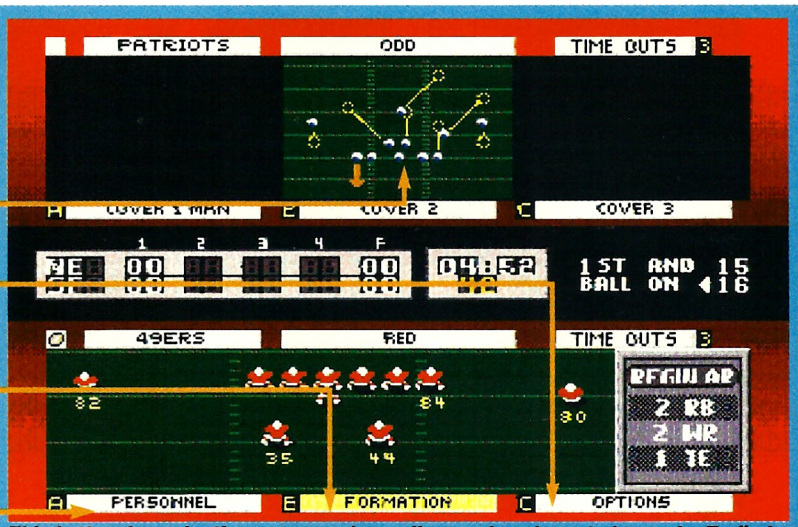
Moving through the play book is very complex, but once you know where to look and which buttons to press, you won't have any problems.

The defence has already chosen its play, so you'd better get on with it

If the situation gets desperate, pressing button C will call up quarterback changes

With the formation section highlighted, you can press up and down to move through the plays available

Pressing button A will bring up personnel changes. At the moment, you have two running backs, two wide receivers and one tight end



This is the play selection screen, where all your plans have to be made. To find out exactly what's what and how to select it, take a look at the explanations opposite. It sounds tricky, but you'll get used to it

help you out as well.

Once you've chosen how you want to play the game, you can choose the length of the game and the surface on which you play. Then you can get on to the business in hand, playing American Football.

And this is where arguably the best feature of *Joe Montana 3* comes into play, the ability to change the view of the pitch. From the play selection screen, you can pause the game and select Horizontal, Vertical Defence, Vertical Offence or Blimp, by pressing Up or Down on the pad (see the box along the bottom of these pages to find out exactly how these work).

The vertical views work best, because you can change the viewpoint play by play. So, if you like coming down pitch when you're on defence, but prefer going up-field when you've got the ball, it's very easy to do, and a very good idea indeed.

Joe Montana 3 offers a wide range of plays from which to choose, but to actually select them does take some getting used to. The play selection screen shows three different modes, which you can choose by pressing the appropriate button: A, B or C.

Once you're into your particular mode, you then move through the options by pressing Up or Down. When you've finished with your set-up, press Left or Right to get through to the play book. From here you press A, B or C again, depending on the play you wish to execute.

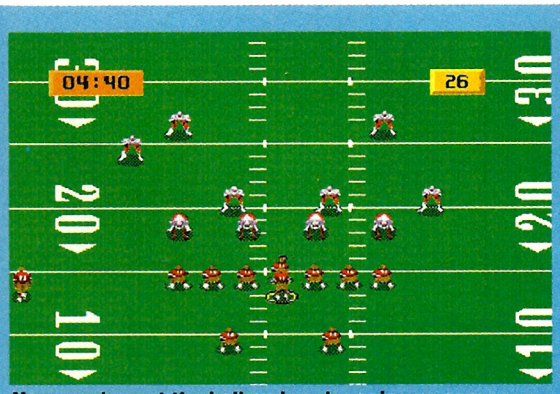
TAKING TO THE FIELD

Your quarterback snaps the ball by pressing button A, or fakes by pressing button C. You then pull back and execute the play. Pressing button B highlights the player to whom you're going to pass, and button A throws the ball.

If your running back or wide receiver catches the ball by standing on the highlighted yellow spot, you'll need to know how to handle yourself and gain some much needed yards. Pressing button C will make you dive (and slide) those extra few yards if you're trying for a first down, but button B will help you avoid falling to the ground, by spinning you out of a tackle. If you're feeling aggressive, however, you can try "palming" a path through the opposition by using button A.

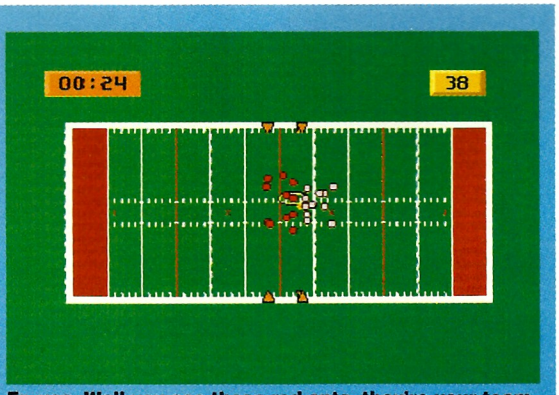
By using all these techniques you should manage to get a touchdown, which you can then convert for an extra point. The extra point, field goal and the kick-off all work in the same way, so once you've sussed out how to kick, you should be able to score every time.

When you set up ready for the kick, a power gauge will appear in the bottom right-hand corner of the screen and a wind gauge will appear in the bottom left-hand corner. Obviously, if you're taking the extra point, then the wind (unless it's gale force) won't have any effect on you. If, however, you're going for a field goal, thirty yards



Now, you've got the ball and you're going up screen. I'd pass to your wide receiver on the left if I were you

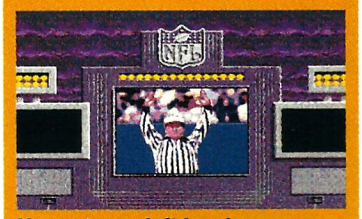
Vertical Offence – This does exactly the same thing as Vertical Defence. If you have the ball and want to play up screen, then select this. If you want to play down screen, then select Vertical Defence.



Er, yes. Well you see those red ants, they're your team, and those white ants are the other lot. OK?

Blimp – Although this is completely useless in normal mode, it is useful for the coach mode, where you can put your theory into practice. If it doesn't work, you can see what went wrong.

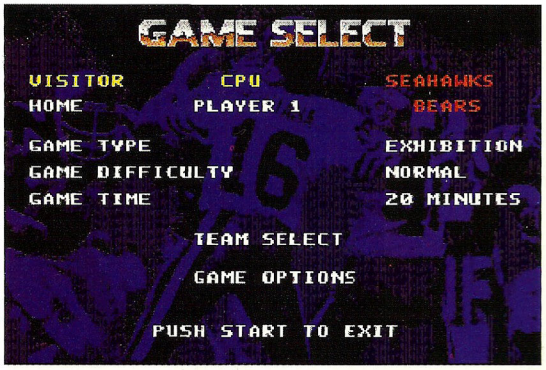
SEGA VISION



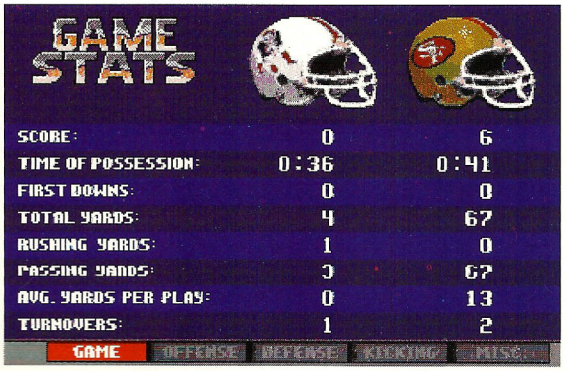
You put your left hand up, your right hand too, do the hokey...

Sega Vision doesn't do anything to the game, it just gives you a break from the action. Make a first down, go offside, score a touchdown or anything that requires a referee to signal something, and you'll be treated to a sample picture of the actual refs movements.

GAME REVIEW



This is the real guts of the game. Choose your options and set the game up however you like



Here we go, some more stats. If you're an American Footy expert, you'll luv these

out, then the wind could obviously interfere. Pressing button A snaps the ball and sets the gauge going. Moving left or right determines the direction, and pressing button A again sets the power of the kick. It's all a bit fiddly at first, but once you've done it several times, it shouldn't be a problem.

So, you've scored seven points and you're doing great, but now the opposition has got the ball and wants some points too. Yet again, there is another control system to master. The play selection screen is the same, but controlling your player after the ball has been snapped is a different matter.

You control one player at a time and if the ball carrier is moving away from you, you can select another player by pressing button B. If this puts you near the ball, the only means of stopping him is by diving at him using button C. Button A doesn't do anything at all.

Hopefully, if you do everything right, victory will be yours. Flushed with success, you can move onto the next match.

Just not as good as *John Madden Football*

GOOD, BUT NOT THAT GOOD

There are plenty of good points about *Joe Montana 3*, but there are equally as many poor aspects. There's a helluva lot of plays, the graphics are very smooth, especially in zoom mode, there's a league, a coaching option, where you just take a managerial mode, excellent speech and loadsa stats.

Unfortunately, there are too many control systems, the play selection screen is rather too comprehensive (especially if you're new to American Football), executing a play isn't very smooth, and the overall gameplay is very repetitive.

It's not that playing the game isn't fun, it just lacks the individuality and friendliness of *John Madden Football*. You don't have as much control over each player, and the lack of moves and possible outcomes on each play just isn't there.

If you're a big American Football (or indeed sports) fan, then *Joe Montana 3* will appeal to you, primarily because it has a league and *John Madden* doesn't. But *John Madden* wins hands down on the playability and realism stakes, and MEGA thinks that these are the most important aspects of any game.

Don't dismiss *NFL Sports Talk Football* completely, just make sure you have a good long play before you buy it. Weigh up the pros and cons of both games and see which one is right for you. *Joe Montana 3* isn't a bad game, (and I know this is a cliché, but I've got to say it) it just isn't as good as *John Madden '93*. Same old story...

Paul Mellerick

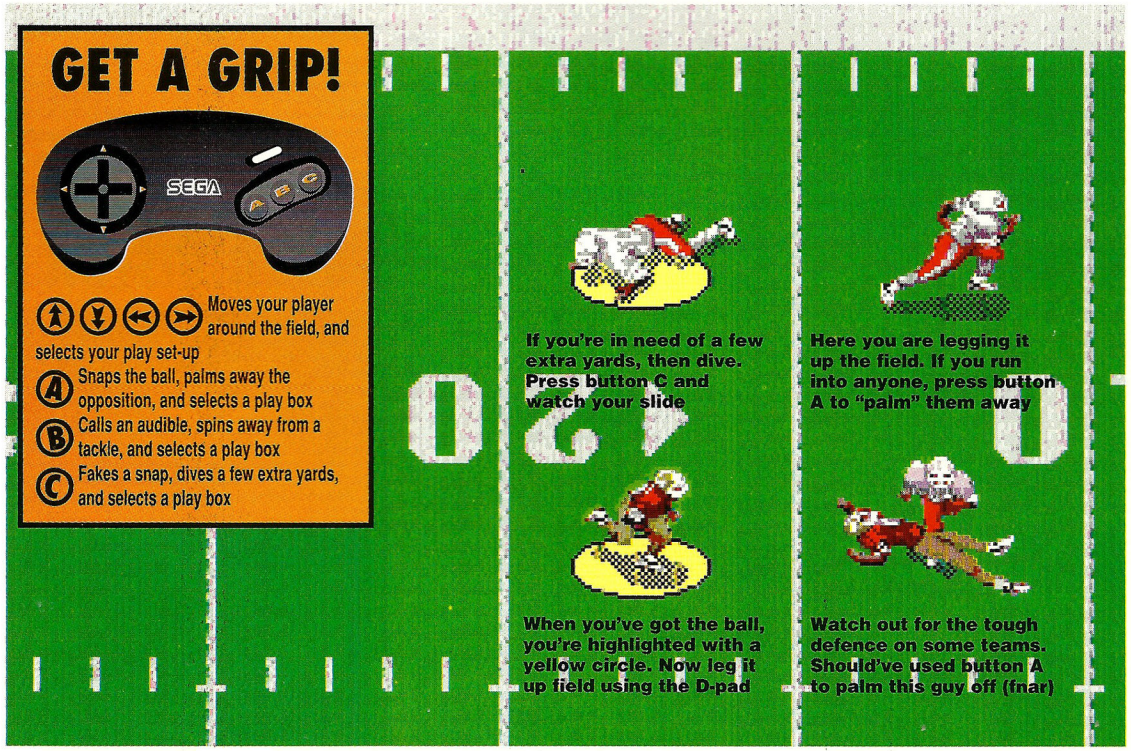
GET A GRIP!

Moves your player around the field, and selects your play set-up

A Snaps the ball, palms away the opposition, and selects a play box

B Calls an audible, spins away from a tackle, and selects a play box

C Fakes a snap, dives a few extra yards, and selects a play box

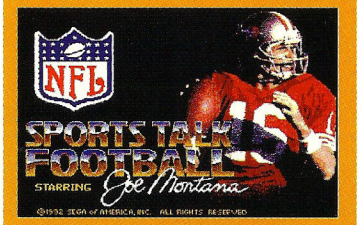


If you're in need of a few extra yards, then dive. Press button C and watch your slide

Here you are legging it up the field. If you run into anyone, press button A to "palm" them away

When you've got the ball, you're highlighted with a yellow circle. Now leg it up field using the D-pad

Watch out for the tough defence on some teams. Should've used button A to palm this guy off (fnar)



PUBLISHER: Sega

PRICE: £39.99

RELEASE: December '92

CARTRIDGE: 9 Mbit

CONTACT: Sega 071 727 8070

Play on your own, against a mate or with a mate

There are three levels – beginner, normal and difficult

Er, no lives, sorry, this is American Football

There's a simple password system for the league only

There's a full 16 match season, then the play-offs and the Sega Bowl

GRAPHICS 9

SOUND 9

GAMEPLAY 7

GAME SIZE 7

ADDICTION 7

"A nice alternative to *John Madden*, and the full season is great, but only for serious sports fans methinks"

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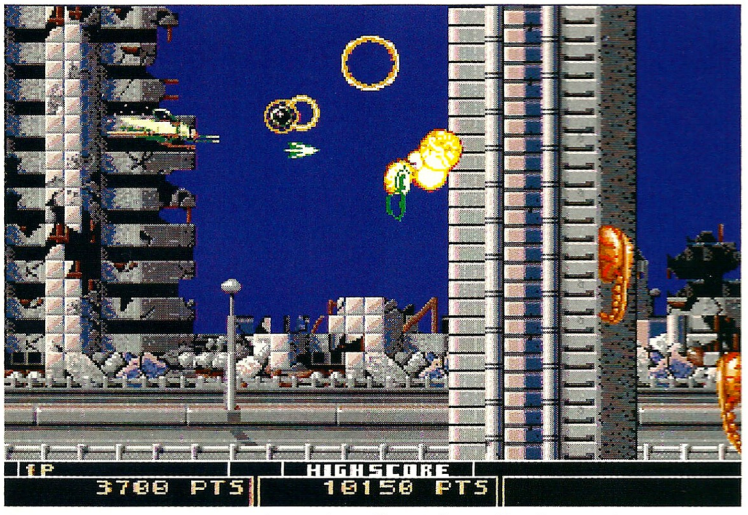
BIO-HAZAR

Oh look, it's *another* shoot-'em-up. Hang on a minute though, this one's got potential, what with yukky insects, hi-tech ships and smooth graphics. Very nice, but Paul Mellerick reckons this game's much the same as all the others

If you cringed over Kafka's "Metamorphosis", barfed over Burroughs' "Naked Lunch", or, indeed, just don't like creepy crawlies, then this multi-directional scrolling shoot-'em-up might not be at the top of your birthday list.

However, if you don't choose to take on the role of one of four insects (well, they may look like insects but they are, in fact, highly engineered bio-ships – you know half living tissue and half machinery?) in this game, you could be missing a rather revolutionary shoot-'em-up.

Bio-Hazard Battle is an 8 Mbit game and the programmers have certainly made the most of the capacity. Instead of the usual crappy explosions that consist of about two frames of animation, the game incorporates some great special effects. The explosions are lovely – enemies are blown into thousands of pieces, which then fade away into nothingness. And no expense has been spared on the aliens either: they move this way and that, all over the screen, firing at you as they go.



Nothing spectacular here, just a few slimy things climbing up the walls. How about just shooting them and forgetting about them?

LUSH LEVELS

Each level has its own theme, and nicely implemented it is too. Particularly notable are the underground levels with festering piles of maggots (nice), and the underwater level that's full of intergalactic kippers (Smoke me one, I'll be back for breakfast – Neil). It's graphical touches like these which give the game a little something more than the average shoot-'em-ups which plague the Mega Drive.

The game incorporates some great special effects

The sound, it also has to be said, is excellent. It actually sounds as if someone has thought about what they're doing, and not like it's been ripped off a Spectrum, like most game soundtracks.

BREAKING THE MOULD?

OK, so the game looks and sounds great, but what does it play like? It is, after all, *only* a shoot-'em-up. The basic gaming strategy is the same "shoot, shoot and shoot some more" game that has been seen a thousand times before, but this one does have its own little touches.

Although most games give you the chance to acquire power-ups – you know the kind of thing, laser, side ships and then more lasers – *Bio-Hazard* has the distinct advantage of giving you a power up to begin with, namely an orbiting satellite. This satellite can be controlled, and you can also choose the weapon with which you want to equip it.

When you shoot a certain ship during the game, a coloured orb will float around the screen. Depending on which ship you are using, this coloured orb will give you a specific weapon (see the box below).

CHOOSE YOUR SHIP AND WEAPONS CAREFULLY

You can choose from one of four Bio-ships and each has its own different characteristics. There are three fish-like ships that move well in water, and an insect-like ship that moves well in air. Change their environments and they don't perform so well.

Each ship has it's own combination of weapons and you can change these at any time by collecting different coloured orbs – there are four colours in all.

Apart from getting these weapons, your ship has a charging weapon, which when used, unleashes a powerful beam of destruction. This is excellent for getting rid of bigger guardians.

Here is a breakdown of each weapon and the type of ammunition it fires.

Orange One: This weapon fires laser rings, which cause considerable damage by bouncing everywhere. At full power they are very useful

Blue One: This weapon fires radiating bullets, which spread in eight directions. It is very handy when there are a host of enemies

Yellow One: This very powerful weapon manually fires bullets in a continuous stream. This is indeed a handy weapon

Green: This weapon fires diffusion bullets. The spread of bullets gets bigger the more powerful the weapon gets

Orange Two: The chasing laser will home in on any enemy. It's good at full power, but not much help when there are lots of enemies

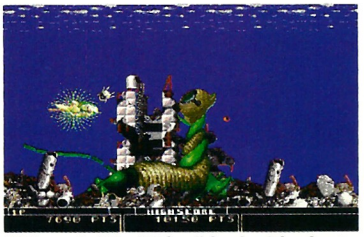
Blue Two: Instructional bullets will aimlessly float in the direction in which they were fired. They're slow, but very powerful

Yellow Two: Laser beam. This weapon fires in a straight line, taking out the smaller enemies at low level

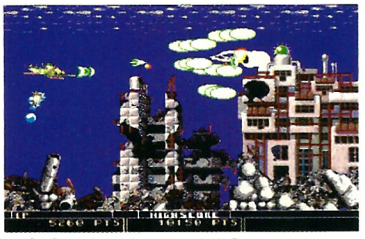
The four power-ups: Get to know the weapon you like best and stick to it. Each weapon has its use, and you should keep it powered up

D BATTLE

Check out the animation of this beast. Oh, it's a screenshot, isn't it? ahem, sorry about that. Oh well, you'll just have to take our word for it



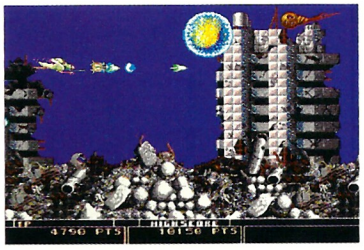
Although this "thing" looks big, just concentrate on its head. A few power blasts should do the trick



This is what happens when you unleash your power bolt

There are four of these coloured orbs, and you can change your currently selected weapon by collecting a new colour.

Another point which raises this game above the average shoot-'em-up is that you can't crash into the scenery, which makes a change from flying around and having your multi-billion turbo-nutter galaxy destroyer blown to pieces by a stray twig.



Hey, check out that scenery, looks like Birmingham city centre after it's been cleaned up

To add to the excitement, there is a simultaneous two-player option, which allows both players on screen at the same time. The advantage of this is that you can cover each other's backs. The disadvantage is that with all this movement, the game does tend to slow down, and it's a bit tricky to tell who's who. It's good fun, but only if your eyes can stand the strain.

When you inevitably die, you start again immediately from the same position. Use up all your lives though and, if you decide to carry on, you'll have to go right back to the beginning of the level. This shouldn't be too much of a problem, however, because although the levels are long, they are not too long.

The learning curve is viciously hard, taking you from really easy to incredibly hard in only a few short levels. But with so many average, finish-in-one-afternoon shoot-'em-ups around, are you about to complain? I think not.

There isn't a lot wrong with this game, and if you are new to the Mega Drive and are looking for something a little bit different, then you could do a lot worse than buy *Bio-Hazard Battle*. But for those with the big "seen it, done it" badge stuck on their gamesplaying talents, you'll already have played this type of game many times before.

Ⓜ *Paul Mellerick*

GET A GRIP!

Moves your bio-ship around the screen and also controls the flight path of your orbiting satellite

A Fires your weapon and your orbiting satellite. Hold down for a power blast

B Same as button A

C Same as button A

Urrgh! What is that? Well, can't stand here all day pondering the miracles of evolution in the animal kingdom, stick this sucker... KA-BOOM!

PUBLISHER: Sega

PRICE: £39.99

RELEASE: January '93

CARTRIDGE: 8 Mbit

CONTACT: Sega 071 727 8070

One or two people can play

Five levels of skill: practice, easy, normal, hard and hardest

Three to five lives, and you can pick up more

No battery back-up and no passwords

There are eight levels

GRAPHICS 8

SOUND 8

GAMEPLAY 5

GAME SIZE 5

ADDICTION 6

"Tough but good fun game, which will keep you going for a long while"

75 PERCENT

Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear. After all the hype and after all the hope, Neil West wishes the caped crusader hadn't bothered coming back at all...

This is level 1.2, set in a rickety old building of some sort. Looks interesting, but the gameplay's the same old crap

It must be one of the trickiest jobs in game development to get the difficulty setting right on a game. Make it too easy, and you get well and truly pasted in reviews for creating something that costs 40 quid and provides half a day's entertainment, but make it too tough and nobody can get past the first level. This means they never get to see all the fabulous, clever and pretty stuff you did later on, and nobody ever buys your games again because they can't see the point in forking out a huge sum of money just to get really frustrated and unhappy when they could watch the news and do it for free.

Too difficult to be any fun

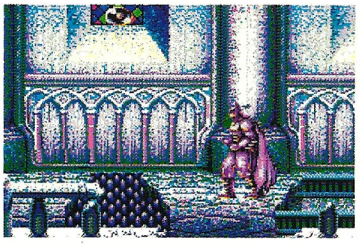
Tricky dilemma, huh?

So companies employ playtesters to thoroughly try out the games before they are released. These playtesters attempt to make sure that the game's got a halfway-reasonable difficulty curve, that lets players progress gradually through it. If this fails, they ensure that there are at least a few adjustable difficulty levels, so that players of all abilities can have a chance to get a bit of value for money out of it. Leastways, that's what usually happens. With *Batman Returns*, someone obviously forgot all about this. Or, more likely – no-one paid any attention to what the playtesters had to say.

HORRIBLY HARD

This is one of the most annoyingly hard Mega Drive games it's been my misfortune to have been annoyed by in quite a long time. It's not the fact that it's hard that's annoying (usually, this level of toughness would earn a hearty MEGA commendation), but it's the way in which it's hard that winds me up.

Batman Returns is one of those games that only has one purpose in life, and it's not to provide fun. Nope, what *Batman Returns* is there for is to provide a challenge to be overcome, something to brag to your mates about for a couple of days (a lot like drinking ten pints of Scuttocks Old Dorrigable) and then leaves you free to buy the next big movie licence title, which should be conveniently coming along at any moment.



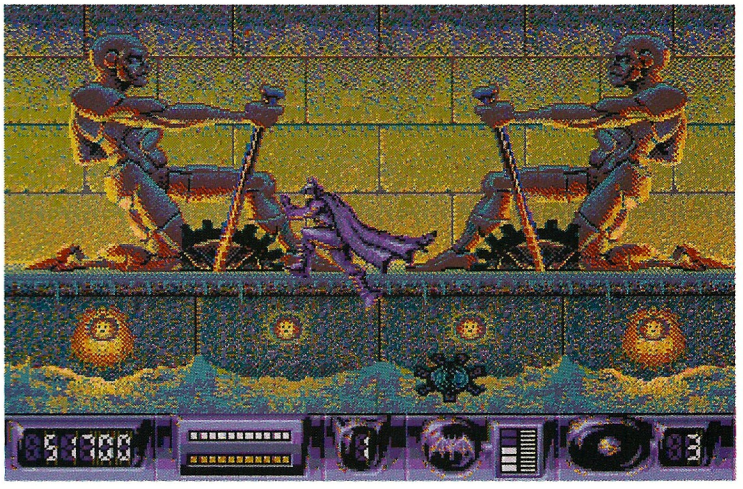
There's a very Gothic feel to *Batman Returns*, but that's the only thing it's got in common with the movie...

... and it's kind of blown away most of the time anyway by the bizarre choice of colour schemes

But is this such a bad thing? Surely us poncy game reviewers can't sit up in our ivory towers safe from the tough realities of programming limitations and demand the best of both worlds? Well yes we can – and here's why.

Batman Returns is hard, because if it wasn't, you'd notice how utterly, utterly tedious it is and never play it again after the first ten minutes. Cynical? Us? It's a bit hard to be otherwise when a game's such a blatant production-line, wrap-it-up-in-a-

Leaping across skyscrapers in Gotham City is all very well and everything, but when they don't have a bottom half it's a bit on the strange side

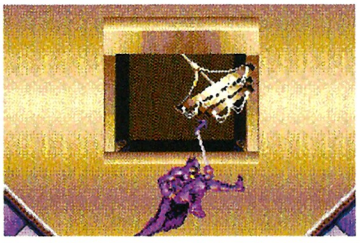


This is the first end-of-level baddie. Er, maybe if you've seen the film, it makes a bit more sense. Hit the dudes in the face a lot, in any case

BATMAN RE

GET A GRIP!

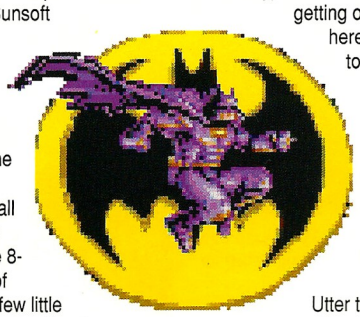
- Batman moves left and right
- Batman looks up and crouches
- A: Batman fires selected weapon
- B: Batman punches
- C: Batman jumps. When used with Up on the joypad, Batman can swing from ropes



More fine athletic displays from old Bats, but to absolutely no useful effect whatsoever

juicy-film-licence-and-no-one-will-notice-the-cracks-underneath effort like this.

Sunsoft (the game's programmers) have been rewriting this game for years now, for various films and various formats, and very little has changed in this particular incarnation (just wait a couple of months for *Superman*, another Sunsoft creation, to be released through the hands of Virgin if you need evidence).



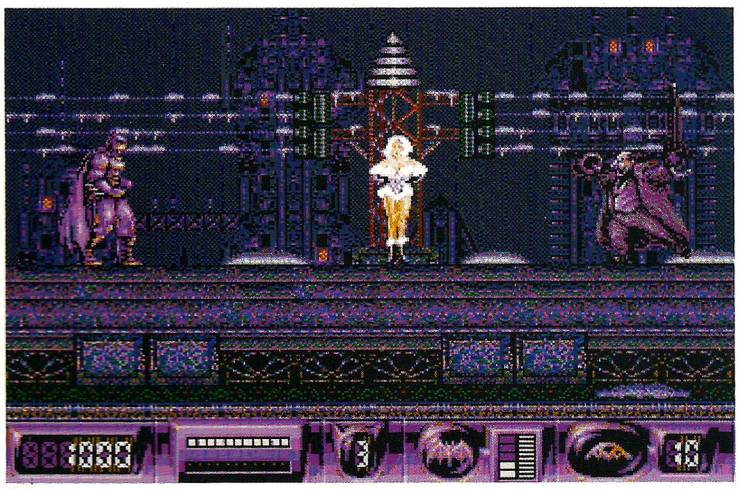
Oh yeah, sure, the graphics are a bit different (although in all honesty this isn't very far at all in front of the 8-bit Nintendo version of *Batman*), there are a few little bits of cosmetic tomfoolery like the level set in a crumbling old building which leans diagonally at 45 degrees to the horizontal, and all the different baddies and suchlike that you might expect, but at the end of the day, it's the same old scene – you walk along a little bit, maybe swing Spiderman-style from the occasional girder using your bat-rope, clobber/kick/belt a baddie who appears out of nowhere very particular, walk along a little bit further and do it all again...

OVER TO THE SNES

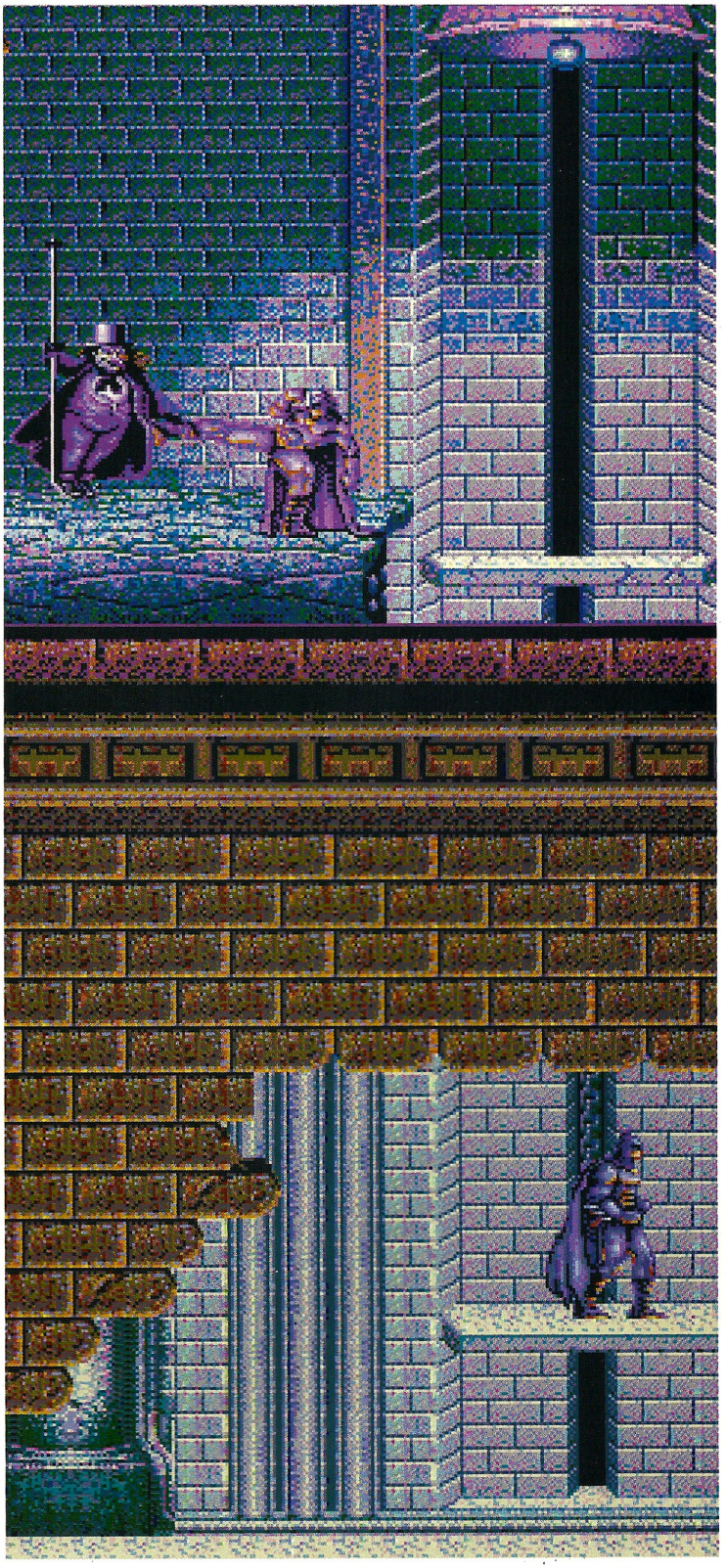
And so on, until you either finish a level (hereby endowing you with the opportunity to do it all again against slightly different scenery) or die of boredom, or... hang on, getting onto dangerous ground here, oh sod it, you only get to write a review once... or you'll more than likely get so completely fed up of Mega Drive games that you either buy a Super NES or give up video games forever and take up train-spotting.

I'm not joking, either. Utter tat hiding behind a big name like this is the biggest threat to the continued survival of the Mega Drive as a cutting-edge gamesplayer's machine in the next couple of years. As the SNES breaks

Turn over



Hubba, hubba! You'll see this gorgeous babe in the intro sequence, but get ready for a bit of a disappointment – she's in for a fall



Batman attempts to put an end to the Penguin, while his twin brother Ratman mooches around on a lower floor somewhere

TURNS

BELT UP BIG STYLE

The amount of fighting tackle old Bazzer can stash in his utility belt is quite amazing. In real life, his handy-dandy trouser strap would need to be about six feet deep. Perhaps it works in the same way as a Tardis?

The standard batarang. Functional, yet stylish

A bomb. It has a delayed fuse, which makes it crap

This sends a large whoop of bats from your cape

What? Well, I don't know what it is. A laser thingy?

The super Batarang. It homes in on enemies. Cor!

more and more technical barriers, as the Neo Geo (maybe) develops a couple of halfway-decent games to go with its astounding specifications, as the Amiga and PC mount ever heavier attacks on the console market with technical innovations and competitive pricing, punters are going to look at the Mega Drive, see what's at the top of the charts (because, let's face it, it's practically always the big licences which sell the most, not the best, games), check it out, say, "Oh God, it's the same old totally awful, generic, ugly, lifeless, characterless, brainless, gutless, spleenless, seen-it-all-before lump of platform drivel. Looks like the Mega Drive's all washed up. Anyone for a game of *Super Mario 12*?"

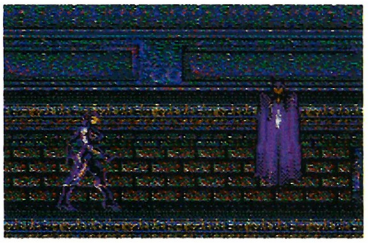
Believe it, it could happen, and it's not because the Mega Drive has no decent games, the Mega Drive has (and let's shout this) MORE FIRST-RATE GAMES THAN ANY OTHER VIDEO GAME SYSTEM IN THE WORLD. I certainly don't want to swap my MD for anything else, thank you very much. But it's the big name games such as this that will sell in the really big numbers, attract more newcomers to the Mega Drive scene and then ultimately, leave them heavily disappointed.

GRUESOME GRAPHICS

The graphics in *Batman Returns* aren't good. Most of the backdrops, although initially appearing atmospheric, soon become blobby, repetitive and featureless, so that you never really know where the hell you are. In the first level, for example, it's impossible to judge if dropping down the screen will result in you landing on a lower platform or falling off into endless space.

It's worse than completely pathetic

All three frames of the animation of most of the characters are very attractive by themselves, but put them into movement and you start to wonder if Batman is really Metal Mickey in a purple rubber suit. Most of the time, the baddies are just characterless, lifeless, useless blobs with no distinguishing features other than the fact that they're obviously "bad". If the manual didn't tell you who everyone was, you'd never work it out for yourself, that's for sure.



Batters is beaten and hangs up his cape... while still wearing it. How odd!

Batman deals with mad bad biker by, er, attempting to trip him up. Prat

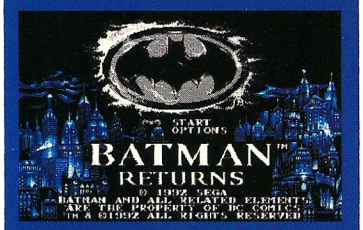
Ooh, it's Catwoman. Except, instead of Michelle, it's a crap purple splodge

The sound in *Batman Returns* does nothing to salvage the situation. It's aimless, pointless, hopeless twittering, which signifies nothing very much. The odd generic "thump" and "oof" ported across from any of a million other crap beat-'em-ups is all there is on offer.

And the gameplay in *Batman Returns*? It'd be a good idea if there was some, we're all for that sort of thing.

Don't kid yourself about this – as a "major software release of 1992" it is completely pathetic. In fact, it's worse than completely pathetic. If it was just AN Other platformer, then it could be filed in the ranks of mediocrity and forgotten, but as one of the biggest licences of 1992 and as one of Sega's new titles designed to spearhead the attack on an unsuspecting batch of Christmas console-buyers, this is crap, crap, crap, crap, CRAP. And that's a real shame.

Ⓜ *Neil West*



PUBLISHER: Sega

PRICE: £39.99

RELEASE: November '92

CARTRIDGE: 8 Mbit

CONTACT: Sega 071 727 8070

Hey, there's only one Batman, right?

Just the one level of skill, but an adjustable number of lives

One, three, five or seven lives. Take your pick

Infinite continues, but they put you back a long way

Far too many levels to mention

GRAPHICS 6

SOUND 5

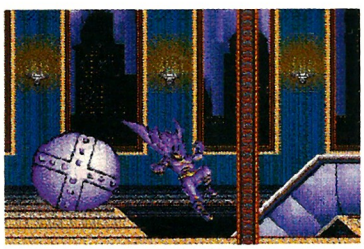
GAMEPLAY 3

GAME SIZE 7

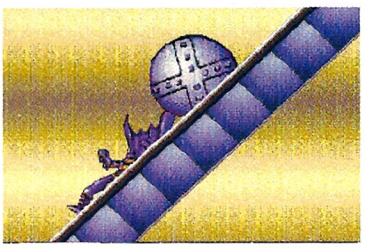
ADDICTION 5

"Just about the least interesting job of a licence anyone could ever have made. Frustrating and hugely dull"

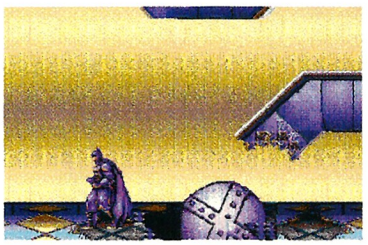
40 PERCENT



That this is just about the most interesting bit we found in the whole game should tell you all you need to know about *Batman Returns*



Chased along a floor by a big ball, Bats leaps down a hole onto a convenient, if inexplicably out-of-place, slippery slide of some sort...



... which has been chewed away at the end, allowing our hero to leap off and let the ball plunge off to, well, somewhere else

CORPORATION

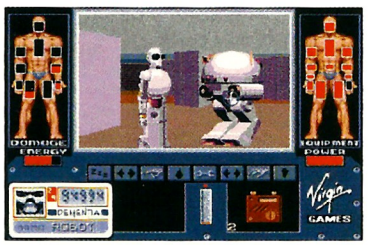
Andy Dyer dons his droid get-up in this 3D adventure game

A genetically engineered mutant has escaped from the lab it was made in, and has been killing people. In order to find out what the hell is going on, a secret agent (working for the government) needs to enter the labs and get hold of a sample of the experiment to see what's afoot.

There's a choice of characters you can take on the mission. Most are human, but there are a couple of droids in there too. Once you've kitted out your character with weapons and various technological widgets (like lock picks), it's off to the UCC building (that's the Universal Cybernetics Corporation) to begin your mission.

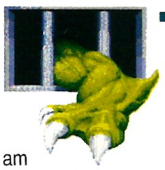
Controlling your character couldn't be simpler. You move forwards, backwards and rotate left and right using the joypad. There's also a menu bar at the foot of the screen, from which you can select items that you've collected. Dead simple, huh? This leaves you free to think about the job in hand, which is just as well, because the job in hand is not immediately apparent.

Because of the bland nature of the scenery, foolish folk who don't read the manual will get hopelessly lost. This may put many people off the game, but taking time to learn all the tricks and find out about mapping devices and such pays dividends later on. Initially, the game is a little daunting and, well, spread out, but you soon get the idea of what exactly you're trying to achieve and the whole thing becomes rather atmospheric and enjoyable.



"Heard the one about the android and the toaster? Oh, you have"

As you get deeper into the game, you'll meet up with gruesome chaps like this. Note also, that by this point I'd managed to pick up a mapping device



The scenery is bland

I'm not exactly raving about it though, am I? The thing is, the graphics are all very smooth and spooky and the gameplay is straightforward while being involved and often intriguing, but as I've already said, the scenery is bland. To start with, this is not a problem, but after exploring five floors that all look the same, the feeling of being involved in some sinister plot inside a large corporate building is utterly lost. It's because your environment doesn't change that there are no real progressions in the gameplay. In other adventure games of this type there are points when you sit back, sigh and say to yourself, "That's that bit sorted, onto the next phase." This is not the case with *Corporation*. It's just a hard slog through to the end.

It's spooky, it's challenging, it's engaging, but ultimately *Corporation* is nothing more than a short-term diversion.

Ⓜ *Andy Dyer*

GET A GRIP!

Moves you around the play area

A Fires your weapon and selects options and collected objects

B No function

C No function

TAKE CONTROL

The D-pad moves you around the play area and moves the pointer around

Button A fires your weapon and also selects any highlighted options

Pressing Start switches between controlling your character and the options menu

PUBLISHER: Virgin

PRICE: £39.99

RELEASE: November '92

CARTRIDGE: 8Mbit

CONTACT: Virgin 081 960 2255

You're on your own. This is strictly a solo adventure

None. The adventure is hard enough as it is

Just the one, but you do have an energy bar

You can obtain password codes at the elevators

No, no, no, no, no! Not a stage to be seen. It's one long haul.

GRAPHICS 8

SOUND 7

GAMEPLAY 7

GAME SIZE 8

ADDICTION 6

"There's lots of playability and a good deal of challenge. It's just a bit on the repetitive side, that's all"

78 PERCENT

Cue Andy Dyer: "There's nothing like getting your hands on a massive throbbing monster. And they don't come any more massive and throbbing than a Lotus, unless, of course, we're talking about the contents of my underp..." (You're fired – Neil)

This is not so much a driving simulation as an arcade race game, which suits us at MEGA just fine. There's no farting around with the actual laws of physics, just get straight into the game and thrash the car around as much as you like without fear of crashing or dying, hurrah!

What's more, you can do it with a friend (race that is).

From the smart presentation screens (piccies of a Lotus Elan and Esprit with technical details) to the straightforward options menu, track plans and ultimately the levels themselves, this game is slick.

A challenge of sheer concentration and speed of reactions

COME RAIN, FOG OR SNOW

It would have been easy to keep the courses fairly similar and just make them slightly harder for each level, but you won't find any such cop-out in this game. Each level is significantly individual and features different kinds of hazards from the one which precedes it. Level one features rocks and water; level two is a night race so it's, er, dark; level three is foggy; level four features snow... I could go on and on, but the screenshots speak for themselves.

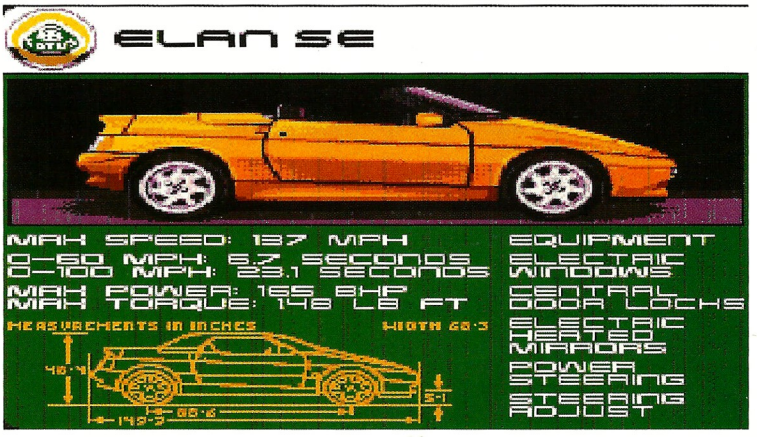
There are eight courses, each made up of around eight stages. Good gamesplayers will probably rattle through more than half of these in the first couple of days play, but the last few levels really are tough, so expect to come to a grinding halt after a while.

It's possible to scrape through many levels with a bit of luck, but to finish the whole game, you'll definitely need to become an exceptional driver. You see, the real increase in difficulty from level to level comes from the ever tightening time limits. In the early stages, you'll reach each checkpoint with several seconds to spare, but later, even if you go flat out and make no mistakes whatsoever, you'll still run out of time just before the checkpoints and just trundle past the line – it's that tight.

Fortunately, it's possible to drive over turbo pods in later levels, which give you an extra burst of speed. This does, however, test your driving skills even further.

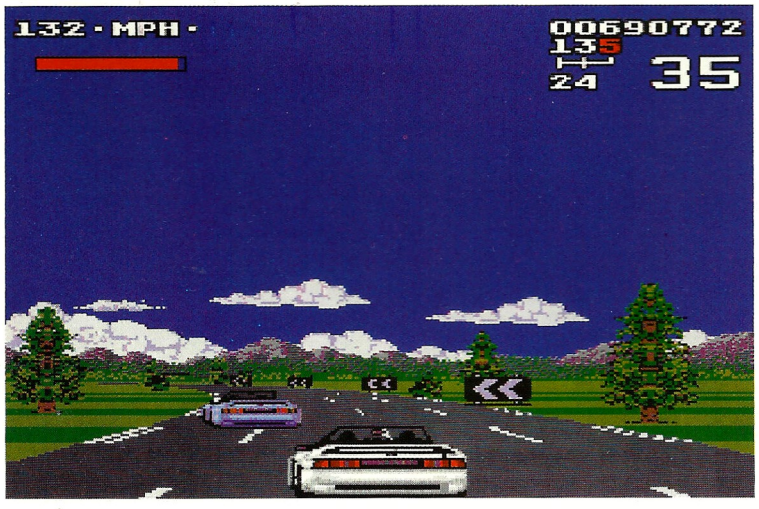
FAB, BUT NOT FOREVER

So, are we looking at a 100% rating? No, not really. Fab this may be, but at the end

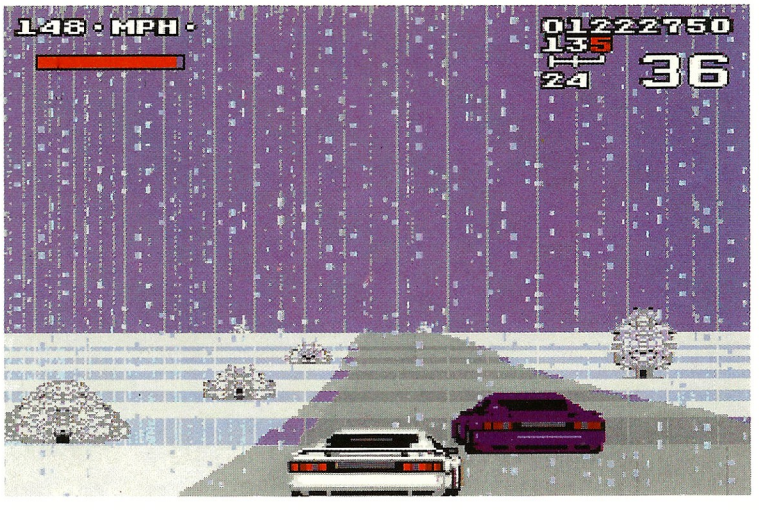


At the start of the game you get to see all the specs relating to the two cars featured in the game. Useless, but it all adds that extra layer of polish

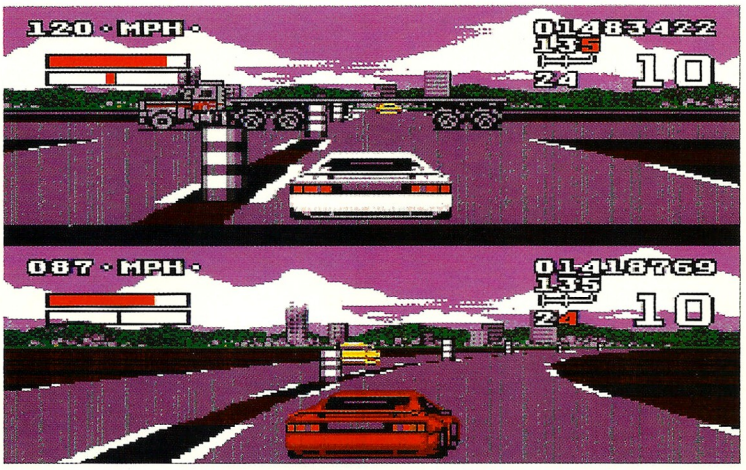
LOTUS TURBO CHALLENGE



Ah yes, I'll stop here to take a wee behind a tree, naively thinking that it's a secluded spot, but discovering later that all road users can see my John Thomas



Snow involves the crystallisation of water under extremely cold conditions. Here though, it's simply white pixels scrolling down the screen. Cunning!



The split-screen two-player mode in full effect. This is the interstate level, which has the added problems of crossroads and oncoming traffic

GET A GRIP!

Moves car left and right along the track

A Brake: a funny pedal thing wot slows you down. Ignore it

B Accelerator:That's more like it. VROOOM! I am mad for speed

C Does nothing. Just sort of sits there looking all black and buttony

of the day, it is just a race game and it won't last a lifetime. Because of the password system you won't ever have to attempt a course twice (not unless you want to) so even though it's challenging, sheer determination will get you through it in a matter of days, weeks at most, but certainly not months.

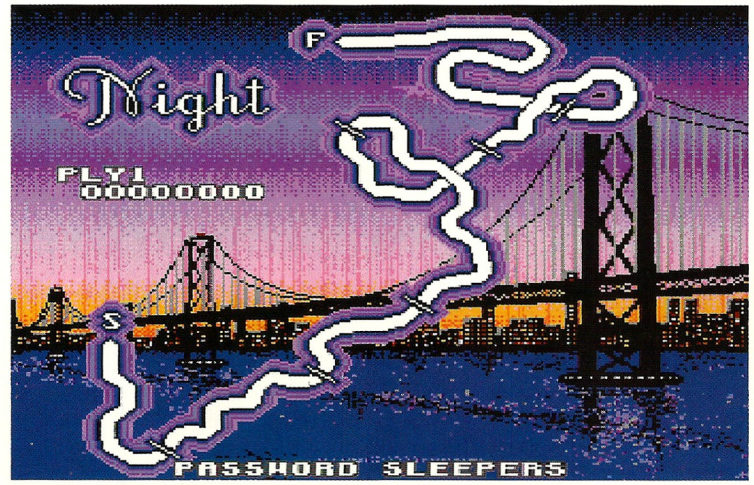
This isn't so much a criticism as an explanation of the limitations of this sort of game. And having said all this, even when you have finished it, you have the superb two-player game to play.

Playing against a friend is mind-blowingly exciting. Steer clear, though, of any close friends who don't like losing. By the end of a session on this split screen, ultra-smooth and incredibly fast race game, you'll either be screaming bloody murder at each other or, worse still, you won't be talking at all. This is partly due to the crash-free gameplay. It's not simply a case of the best man winning – quite often you'll find that it's the dirtiest driver who wins. If you're ahead of your opponent, you can position yourself just in front of him blocking his route past you. Eventually, he'll nudge the back of your car, sending you shooting forwards and leaving him far behind. Entirely unfair it may be, but it's incredibly satisfying.

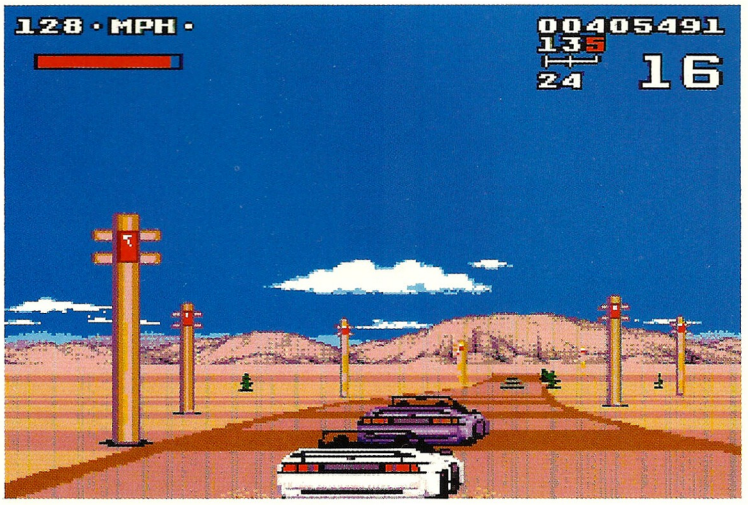
OK, there's not much thought needed for the game, and elaborate skills are not what's required, but for a challenge of sheer concentration and speed of reactions, this is unbeatable... at least at the moment.

But perhaps we should remember that we've got *Road Rash 2* coming up soon. Also, there were three other versions of *Lotus* on the home computers, each being a slight improvement over the previous one. In light of this, race freaks with more than a modicum of patience could hold on for a bit to see what happens, but anyone who's got the money, and wants the best all-action race game there currently is, should (all together now) "rush out and buy it".

Ⓜ Andy Dyer



Study the course maps, so you know when really bad corners are coming up. Or you could just wade straight in and make a boobie of yourself



This is the desert level. It doesn't have any adverse weather conditions, but you do get a bit of grief from tumbleweed. Isn't it always the way?

THEN AGAIN...

***Road Rash 2* is on its way. It may well be worth waiting for**

Well, what with *Lotus Turbo Challenge* being split screen and so slick and all, we reckon the only real alternative is going to be *Road Rash 2*, which is coming out shortly. If you want to know more about that one, we'll be reviewing it in next month's issue of MEGA.

LOTUS TURBO CHALLENGE
Licensed by Sega Enterprises Ltd.

PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts

PRICE: £39.99

RELEASE: December '92

CARTRIDGE: 8 Mbit

CONTACT: EA 0753 549442

One or two players, and in two-player mode it's split screen simultaneous action... very nice

SKILL! No skill levels, but the course gets progressively trickier

No lives, but your car is invincible, so it's all done on time limits

There's a password for each course

Eight courses, each made up of a number of sections (usually eight)

GRAPHICS 8

SOUND 6

GAMEPLAY 7

GAME SIZE 8

ADDICTION 9

"For fast, smooth, challenging, two-player drive-'em-up action, there's nothing to touch it"

83 PERCENT

WORLD OF ILL STARRING MICKEY AND DONALD

Still psychologically scarred from a recent trip to Disney Land, Neil West is hell-bent on revenge. After two hours of inflicting hideous pixellated death on Mickey, he recovers enough composure to scrawl a review...

This is going to be a bit of a tricky one to call. *World of Illusion* operates on so many different levels that I think the only sensible way to review it is going to be to write three completely different reviews, depending on who's actually playing the game. I'll then try to come to some kind of cobbled-together hope-for-the-best conclusion at the end of it all. No time to waste, then, so let's get on with it, pausing only for a quick plot synopsis, which applies to the whole thing.

THAT PLOT SYNOPSIS IN FULL

Well, travelling illusionists Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck appear to have, rather carelessly, gone and accidentally transported themselves to the dimension of a malicious wizard while mucking around with some magic tricks. To get out again, they're going to have to travel through several worlds, battling against lots of magical meanies and end-of-level zzzzz.... Oops, sorry.

As they battle through their strange magic world, the game's pedigree begins to show immediately. *Castle Of Illusion* broke new graphical ground on the Mega Drive, setting standards that only Sega themselves have equalled so far in their sibling games *Quackshot, Taz-Mania* and (as far as graphics are concerned at least) *Fantasia. World Of Illusion* delivers another dose of the same high-quality, cartoon-style visuals – three cheers for Sega.

The gameplay complements the graphics in terms of slick simplicity – both Mickey and Donald are easily controlled as they walk, run, crawl or jump around their world – due to attentive sprite animation routines and a well thought out control system. And each character comes armed with a magic table cloth with which to transform its foes into plants or butterflies.

The nature of the game is reasonably simple, it's a fairly linear platform adventure with tricky jumps to make, baddies to disperse and end-of-level bad guys to deal with – you've seen the formula many times before, although maybe not as well presented. There are three separate game modes, two-player, or single player with Mickey, or single player with Donald. Each mode provides a change in level design, but the feel remains the same throughout.

Anyway, that's the game mechanics pretty much in their entirety, let's just get on with the review(s), shall we?

REVIEW FOR ANYONE OVER THE AGE OF 11

Look, just forget it, OK? When *World Of Illusion* first appeared in the office, we sat Paul down with it at 9.30 am and told him that he wasn't allowed to eat again until he'd finished the whole game (we thought he could do with losing a couple of pounds, y'see). At quarter past ten Andy fancied a cup of coffee, so he shouted for Paul to go and make him one. At about half past ten he realised that he was still thirsty, and wondered aloud where Paul had got to.

"Oh, he nipped off to McDonalds at about ten past ten," said Amanda. "He mumbled something about the easiest game he'd ever played in his life."

Yep, our boy Paul Mellerick, in the guise of Mickey Mouse, sailed through the entire one-player version of *World Of Illusion* in 40 minutes flat on his first attempt, and it wasn't a fluke either – the rest of us found it just as straightforward. The thing is, while it's all very (very) pretty and everything, there's very little actual game in there – enemies only stroll up every half a day or so, and when they do, a simple swipe of Mickey's magic cape from half a screen away will miraculously turn them straight into a harmless little flower or butterfly.

There's very little game in there

Even the bosses are an absolute pushover, and generally the only way you'll ever lose any lives is by getting a bit careless and falling off the bottom of the screen on one of the mildly complicated cloud-hopping sky levels.

OK, so the Donald version is slightly more taxing, but nothing that should cause a relatively able gamer (Eyes? Fingers? Reflexes? You'll do) to break into a sweat.

If you're at all grown-up, you'll go through this single-player game like a dose of salts, and get very, very grumpy indeed

Doing this seesaw section in two-player mode will take you five times as long as in the solo game, but it's also five times as much fun

This underwater level looks utterly stunning, but the only danger you'll encounter is the odd near-harmless fish and a few spiky shell things

Donald looks characteristically determined to do what's right in the face of some unlikely localised weather conditions

USION MOUSE DUCK

I GET BY WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS

When you play *World of Illusion* with a friend, you'll discover some smashing two-player interaction, which makes the whole game massively more entertaining.

The simplest way the two buddies help each other out is by providing a handy leg-up (ooh no missus) for those jumps that are just a little too high to make. The best thing about this is the hilarious way in which the characters teeter about while they're doing it.

In solo mode, the seesaws on level one come complete with rocks, which catapult Mickey or Donald up onto the higher branches of the trees. In dual mode, however, the rocks are gone and our bold boys have to use their body weights to launch the other skywards. This, of course, leaves one of them stuck on the floor, but no problem – just wander to the edge of the branch and press the A button, and the uppermost dude will lower a rope for his comrade to climb up.

In level two, you start to find narrow gaps, which are too big to accommodate the terrific twosome in their normal, standing-up gait. Both of them can crawl along the ground to squeeze through, but Donald, on account of his more substantial rear end, frequently gets himself completely and utterly stuck. Luckily, though, a good solid bout of tugging from Mickey will see his pal freed, even if he does move a little further than he really wanted to...

Later on in the same section, our intrepid double-act find themselves standing by an old mine truck. If you've ever watched any kind of cartoon before, you'll know what you have to do here. Stand one of the lads on either end of the truck, and jump up and down alternately to propel it past rockfalls, up steep slopes and across rickety bridges, in classic comical style. This really is great fun, and it makes up for all the game's shortcomings in single-player mode.

The presentation is immaculate, right down to choosing options

This is one of the hardest bits in the game, but it's still not hard at all

Mickey, finding progress difficult, employs a novel stepping stone to get him up a wall. Donald, with a sore head, co-operates

about what you've just done with 40 quid. Unlike *Sonic 2*, when you finish *World Of Illusion* there's no reason at all to ever come back to this game: there's none of the multiple pathways, secret passageways or time trials of *Sonic* to keep you hooked.

No, for a single, well experienced gamesplayer *World Of Illusion* is chronically small and severely lacking in (what football commentators are so fond of calling) legs. After all, if you just want to watch a cartoon, buying a video of Fantasia is a lot cheaper and it lasts twice as long...

REVIEW FOR ANYONE NOT OVER THE AGE OF 11

Wow! Look at those graphics! They're brilliant! It's just like a real cartoon! And I must be a really great gamesplayer, 'cos I'm getting miles and miles and it's only my first go! And the graphics are brilliant! And you get to be either Mickey or Donald, and they've got their own little bits of speech! It's brilliant! And so are the graphics! Wow, look at the brilliant way the backgrounds go all wobbly in the underwater levels! It's better than a Super NES! Brilliant! Now I can really slag off that guy at school who always says Mega Drives are rubbish! And you get about a hundred different tunes to listen to! And the graphics are brilliant! Oh no! I'm going to fill my pants! (Snip! – Neil). Quite. Moving swiftly on...

Wow! The graphics are brill

REVIEW FOR ANYONE WITH A FRIEND

Doesn't sound so good so far, does it? Hang on a minute though. Let's just try out that two-player game before we consign this one to the "Let's try it with a bit of playtesting next time, eh guys?" file. You can't beat a bit of interaction with a close personal friend, that's what my granny always used to say.

The first thing you notice when playing in two-player mode isn't so much the extra thing you get (ie the other character), but the stuff you actually lose. Lots of gameplay bits and bobs, which were previously present, disappear, to make the two-player interaction a bit more, well, interactive (see I GET BY WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS box above).

But wait – progress a little bit (ie past the first level) and you suddenly notice that something's changed. In fact, something's been completely added – it's a whole new level! Yep, in the two-player game you get whole new

Turn over

The second end-of-level boss is, in fact, half-a-dozen little bosses, but they won't give you much trouble. Twelve swipes of the cape, and it's all over

GET A GRIP!

- Moves Mickey or Donald around the screen
- Mickey or Donald crouches. Used with C, it allows you to squeeze under obstacles
- A: Mickey or Donald runs
- B: Mickey or Donald attacks with their magic capes
- C: Mickey or Donald jumps

extra sections, which just aren't there in the solo version, and it makes the whole thing massively more entertaining, because, unlike most two-player games, where you're simply there to get in each other's way and hold up the scrolling, *World Of Illusion* in two-player mode is a real co-operative effort – most of the time you simply can't get anywhere if you don't play as a team.

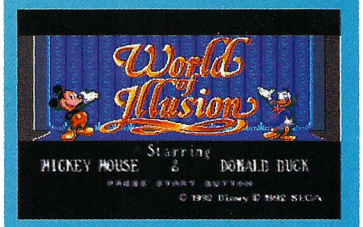
It's a lot more rewarding, too – you get a real sense of achievement from managing to co-ordinate your efforts, especially on the mine cart, where one slip can see you plunging through a rickety bridge to your doom(s). It's still not the toughest game in the world, and some of the flaws in the single-player game are still there (like the general slow pace, and the fact that "continues" actually send you back as many as three sub-levels, which is a real pain in the bum when, due to the aforementioned slow pace, it'd just taken you 20 minutes to get through them), but *World Of Illusion*, two-player style, will make you smile a lot, and there aren't too many games you can say that of these days.

So, bearing all this in mind, I'm going to give this game a much higher mark than I'd originally imagined. When you look at it, though, bear in mind that if you're playing the game by yourself, you should knock about 30% straight off, and if you're a battle-hardened action freak, you'll probably want to drop even that by about another 10%. If you're quite young, not very good at games and a fan of Mickey and Donald, however, this might well be the best game you ever buy.

Neil West

in case you were wondering what happened to the first end-of-level boss, here it is – twice as easy as boss two

Bizarrely, jumping on this flower causes it to emit leaves, which form a ladder in mid-air for no apparent reason



PUBLISHER: Sega

PRICE: £39.99

RELEASE: December '92

CARTRIDGE: 8 Mbit

CONTACT: Sega 071 727 8070

- Be Mickey, Donald, Mickey and Donald or Donald and Mickey
- SKILL: Just one level of skill, but different for one- and two-player games
- Three lives, but lots of energy for each one, and infinite continues
- You get a password whenever you run out of lives
- Number of levels varies depending on number of players

GRAPHICS 9

SOUND 9

GAMEPLAY 6

GAME SIZE 3

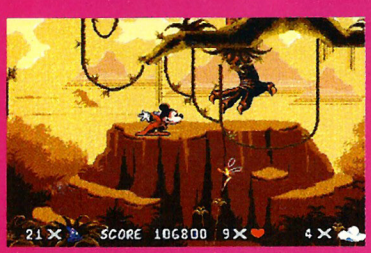
ADDICTION 7

"Very, very easy to complete, and very, very dull in one-player mode, but fantastic for a couple of youngsters"

82 PERCENT

THEN AGAIN...

World Of Illusion is Sega's fourth Disney game. First came *Castle Of illusion*, the disappointing *Fantasia* soon followed, and then came Donald Duck in the excellent *Quackshot*. Check out the Top 100 (on page 82), but here's a quick profile on each...



***Fantasia*: looks lovely, plays like a dog. Let's move quickly on to...**

***Castle Of Illusion (starring Mickey Mouse)*: This was Mickey's first Mega Drive appearance and the game set new graphical standards that only Sega's own programmers have bettered.**

It's infinitely more playable, entertaining and enjoyable than *Fantasia*. If you can pick up a bargain second-hand copy, do. Still, it's not quite as good as Donald Duck's debut appearance in...

***Quackshot*. The sink-plunger firing adventurer with the hot temper (just don't let him eat too many chillies) stars in a marvellous game that'll appeal to old, young, experienced or novice gamers alike.**

***Quackshot* is probably the best of the four Disney games (for a single player at any rate) and it gets a big MEGA thumbs-up, not to mention the number nine position in the Top 100. Give it a try...**

KING SALMON

It had to happen, didn't it? Of all the sports in the world to choose from, someone eventually had to come up with a simulator of one of the most tedious... fishing

Yes, hard though it is to comprehend, the sport of "sitting in a boat for hours on end in an effort to perhaps almost catch one salmon before going home knackered and dejected" has finally appeared on the Mega Drive.

King Salmon, according to the manual is a... oh, something's gone wrong with the print on the first page. Let's just turn ove... ah I see. It's all in bloody Japanese. Oh I get it, they've accidentally put the wrong manual in. Let's try the game itself. Those Japs are such a curious bunch, the games are usually in English... but no. That's all in Japanese too.

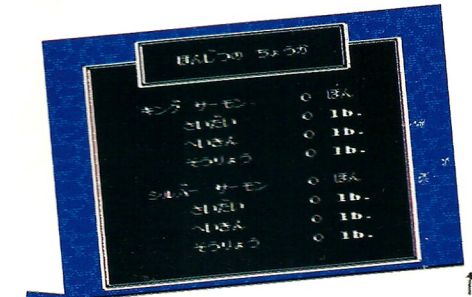
Now, with a shoot-'em-up this wouldn't be a problem, but with a fishing simulator it's a pretty major bummer. So then, it would appear that my fishing exploits are restricted to driving my boat around the bleedin' harbour in the hope that I'll randomly come across some stupid bloody salmon who'll decide it would be a giggle to leap aboard shouting, "eat me, eat me".

It ain't gonna happen though, is it? And I'll tell you what else isn't going to happen (at least to those who don't speak Japanese, and let's face it, that's pretty much everyone), anyone who buys this game is stuffed. Without a translator, this is unfathomable. SO WHY THE HELL ARE PEOPLE IMPORTING IT?

Well, I'm sorry, but until I either get an English version, or somebody explains this ludicrous situation, I'm not going to do anything more to this pathetic review.

(ERM, ANDY? IS THAT IT? COULDN'T YOU JUST DO THE BEST YOU CAN? - Neil)

No, bugger off! That's your lot - Andy



ANDY, WHAT'S ALL THIS ABOUT?

How should I know? It's in pigging Japanese - Andy

PUBLISHER: Sage's Creation

PRICE: £35

RELEASE: Out now on import

CARTRIDGE: Useless

CONTACT: Don't bother

Mmmmm...

Um, er

Tricky...

I'll come back to you on that one

Can't quite work ou... no, it's no good

GRAPHICS 7

SOUND 7

GAMEPLAY ?

GAME SIZE ?

ADDICTION ?

"Don't buy it! It's a complete waste of time. It's in Japanese for Christ's sake"

00 PERCENT

007

The man who swore he'd never say never again... and then said it anyway, the man with the slick and astonishingly oily, er, English charm, is back. Yes, 007 is here, but only to do some prancing in a rather uninspiring platform game with Neil West

"Eat lead, sucker! Hang on, I'm James Bond, not Mel Gibson"

He really should know better for a man of his age. Shouldn't he seriously be considering making a will or something? Perhaps he should even be putting a sensible down-payment on a country cottage or buying an expensive and attractive range of tweed jackets? It's even been suggested that he should be taking out funeral insurance. But no, instead he's kept his lust for excitement and his unquenchable thirst for the irresistible sleaze and glamour of danger. And besides, he's James Bond – we all know he can't die, anyway.

This man has to brave the mortal determination of international drug-rings led by ruthless and powerful maniacs. He gets to roll around huge four-poster beds with some of the most exotic and captivatingly beautiful women in the world... before killing them. Now, as if all that wasn't enough, he's got to put up with starring in a relatively bog-standard platform game.

OK, so, you fly in on your trusty jet-pack, and it's time to face level one. The first thing you notice is the alarming number of guys in uniforms running backwards and forwards. The second thing you notice is, as you climb the first ladder and casually mince along the first platform, you are duly shot in the head by a guy in a uniform. This is where you realise that things have to be approached a little more furtively.

GIRLS, GIRLS, GIRLS...

The "things" in question on the first level are three girlie hostages, who have been tied up and forced to listen to Brian May songs, before being dumped in annoyingly random areas across the level. As you chip away through the levels, the hostages you need to rescue increase in number and are stashed in more inaccessible places.

Hell, it's just all too familiar

Bond (who, incidentally, takes the Timothy Dalton guise for this particular adventure) has plenty of athletic stunts with which to impress and baffle the enemy. Aside from trotting around at a fairly healthy pace, he can also swim, jump and hide in doorways and niches, ready to leap out at the last second and surprise the guards with a well-aimed slug. When an enemy agent is dispatched, he will usually leave behind a highly convenient extra cartridge of ammunition which can be used to increase the firepower of your own weapon. You can fire in six directions and – in a realistic, but potentially lethal touch – you often need to stand around for a second and change your cartridge, giving any baddie in the vicinity plenty of time to get in a shot of his own.

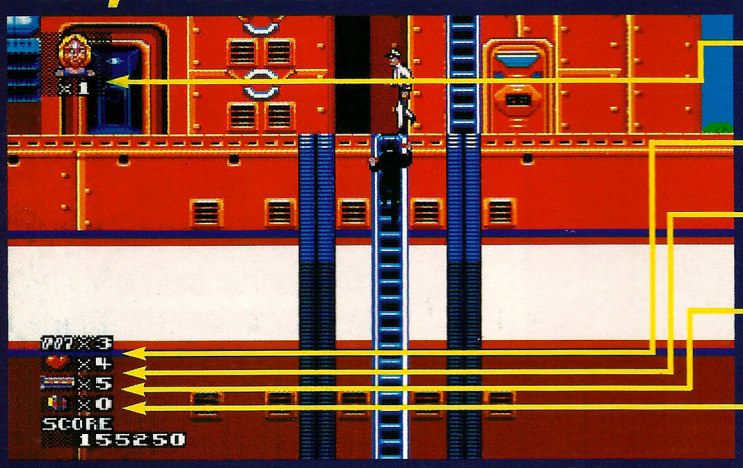
A big problem with the game, particularly on level two, is that you tend to fall into deep pits with ruddy great spikes at the bottom. You must jump over these pits to avoid the spikes, or you die

IT ALWAYS ENDS IN TEARS

Now for the bad news. At the end of each level you have to face the might of one of the famous Bond arch-enemies like Jaws, Odd Job or Bones in a vicious fight to the death. Here, the idea is to wait until the baddie straps you onto a table with a laser going down the middle, before he gives you an in-depth explanation of his dastardly plans while you throw in a corny line or two. No, actually you have to shoot him – more than once, about fifty times

Now and again, one of these indigenous people crop up and lob knives at you, so watch out

"AH, I'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOU, MR BOND"



The blonde girlie is in distress. Thank goodness, only one more babe to gallantly rescue...

You've only got three lives left, so you'd better take extra special care

Hit points remaining. Another four knock downs and that's it, you're history, matey

Cartridges of ammunition remaining – you're still doing alright for these, thankfully

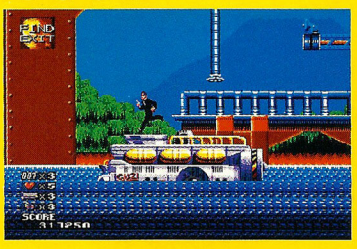
Grenades. You should try to save them for the end-of-level bad guys. Looks like you're rather snookered

JAMES BOND

THE FIRST LEVEL – A WALK THROUGH

See that funny shield thing? That's where you let off the bomb which you picked up earlier

Set the bomb and then stand well back to watch the fireworks. You are good, aren't you Bond?



Find Jaws and shoot him four or five times. Then jump over him, do a deft about-turn and shoot him in

actually. Only then can you saunter onto the next level, fresh and glowing from your temporary victory.

There's also a tiny puzzle aspect – in the form of a bomb, which must be found and attached to, er, something which looks like a rather obvious bomb icon. Other tiny, but game-enhancing frills include the grenades, which seemed to be next to useless against anything, including the end-of-level bosses, and the swimming, where drifting into the path of the sharks is most entertaining... seconds of fun.

FROLICKING AROUND

Unfortunately, that's about it. The graphics are adequate – they're animated well, but they sure ain't gonna stun you into disbelief. Game action is strictly limited to frolicking around, picking up things and taking them to certain sections of the terrain.

Think of it like this – you run, you jump, you shoot someone, you avoid someone, you get shot by someone, you can't find the bomb, you find the bomb, you plant the bomb, you kill the end-of-level boss, you leave. Although the levels feature different geography – tropical islands, sea-ports – the actual structure of the game action doesn't go through any radical changes.

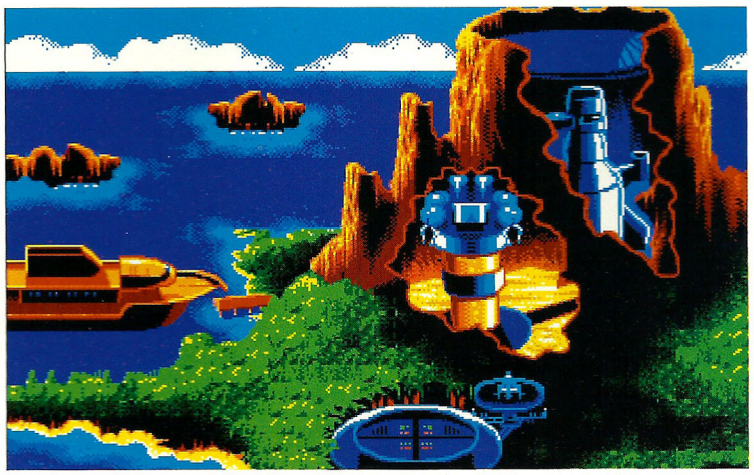
There's no level passwords, the music is unbelievably irritating and, hell, it's all just so familiar. It's difficult to see the logic behind releasing this kind of thing on the Mega Drive. *James Bond – The Duel* is a complete waste of the hardware's capabilities. It's more On Her Majesty's Secret Service than Dr No.

Ⓜ *Neil West*

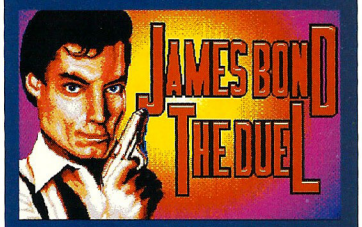
Bond is agile. He can jump, run, swim, er, jump again... and he can also climb up and down hanging vines in the jungle. And he always throws his hat precisely onto the hat-rack. What a guy! Pity he's fictional

GET A GRIP!

- Bond walks and swims left and right
- Bond climbs up and down ladders. Down also makes Bond crouch
- A: Bond jumps
- B: Bond throws grenade
- C: Bond fires his pistol in any direction when used in conjunction with D-pad



By Scaramanga's third nipple, it's an incredibly well-drawn intro screen



PUBLISHER: Domark

PRICE: £39.99

RELEASE: December '92

CARTRIDGE: 4 Mbit

CONTACT: Domark 081 780 2222

- Bond always works alone (except when the odd girlie helps him out)
- Three levels of skill – normal, hard and manic
- You only live five times in this adventure
- No battery back-up or passwords, but then it's not a very big game
- There are four stages – three proper missions and a final battle

GRAPHICS 6

SOUND 4

GAMEPLAY 7

GAME SIZE 6

ADDICTION 6

"Don't believe the hype. This is a rather dull and routine platform game, which just happens to carry the James Bond name. Stunningly ordinary"

55 PERCENT

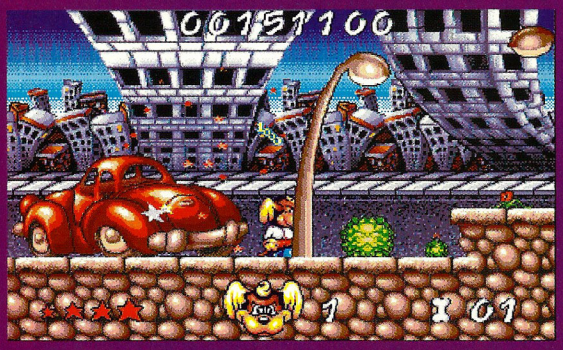
THE DUEL

DOGSVILLE ZONE TWO

The bizarre and interesting Dogsville section has some strange scenery and some even stranger occupants – even the cars look weird.

Check out what's in store for our superdog, as we take you through the second, and final zone, where you'll meet up with Mr Bum Cleavage.

You'll come up against all sorts of enemies (mainly dogs), which will take some serious stick before they'll leave you alone. Oh by the way, if you look at the scenery every now and then, you'll see people peering out of their windows to see what's happening.



Check out that car. Would *you* go for a ride in it?

Ouch! Don't just stand there, either hit him or run for it

WONDER

What do you get if you cross Star Trek with Lassie? *Wonderdog*, that's what. Paul Mellerick checks out the latest Mega CD offering and finds yet another cute platform game that's way too easy

What *is* it about the Mega CD? Every time a new CD game arrives in the office, everyone gets all excited. We stand around expectantly waiting for the poor thing to do something quite incredible.

Well, so far we've been disappointed. There have been no really big games, no amazing graphics (with the exception of *Thunder Storm FX),* and no game which would really make you want to rush out to buy the damn machine.

That's where *Wonderdog* comes in. You see, this game is decidedly cute: looks nice, has great sound and is really good fun to play. But why do programmers insist on making games that will last you two days at the most?

Wonderdog is a bit different from your average Mega CD game, because it wasn't actually made for the Mega CD – it is, in fact, one of the free games you get when you buy the Wonder Mega.

The Wonder Mega is a Japanese only machine made jointly by Sega and JVC, which combines a Mega Drive and Mega CD in one nice little grey unit. It was launched about eight months ago and is selling quite nicely. However, JVC decided that they'd sell the game on its own and make a bit more money. Anyway, enough of this corporate rubbish, let's get down to the game in hand.

OBSCURE DEMO

Once you've loaded up a Mega CD game, you *never* go straight into it. Instead, you sit back, watch the title screen for a while and then wait for the demo to appear. Because of the amount of memory available, Mega CD demos are usually very good. In fact, some are even better than the game, *Earnest Evans* being a very good case in point.

Wonderdog's demo, however, is very different from the rest – it's funny and it looks like a proper cartoon. You won't see any Japanese people with outrageously big eyes, any macho men with more muscle than brains and, more importantly, you won't hear any silly speech that will have you rolling about on the floor.

Trouble with this demo is that it has nothing to do with the game. Wonderdog crash-lands on Earth and is rescued by a small boy. The two become friends and play together for a while, then daddy comes along, takes the boy home and leaves the dog behind. Wonderdog goes back to the ship, dresses up in his Wonder costume and, er, that's it. It finishes and you go back to the title screen.

The real plot behind *Wonderdog* involves you travelling through seven worlds, getting through to the end, beating up the end-of-level boss and finally meeting up with the master evil dog.

The thing is, each world is split up into zones. Some worlds have four zones, some have three and some have only one. Work your way through each zone, and when you get to the final one, you'll come up against the end-of-level baddie.

GET A GRIP!

- ◄ ► Moves you left and right throughout the level
- ▼ Makes Wonderdog crouch
- A Makes Wonderdog jump
- B Uses your Star Power. The longer you hold it down, the more power you get
- C When held down, it speeds Wonderdog up – ideal for sliding under gaps

The final planet (Kninus), and Wonderdog is taking some serious stick from that spaceship above his head. Still, Wonderdog has got some energy left, so disposing of the ship shouldn't be too much of a problem

If a gap is too small to negotiate, take a run at it and pull down on the pad. You should slide through

If there's no where to go, try digging a tunnel

Urggh! Check out that bum cleavage, bet he's a brickie

DOG

MEGA CD

You can find a hidden route to a bonus room by standing on some blocks. Watch as you spin upwards...

...and land in the room. Collect the bonuses and then fall off the edge to return to where you came from

POWER PLAY

Wonderdog can run, jump and get rid of any baddies by using his Star Power. Star Power is Wonderdog's own little device, which will fire a star across the screen. Most bad guys can only take one hit of Star Power, but the further you get into the game, the more hits they can take. Consequently, end-of-level baddies take several hits.

You can replenish your Star Power by holding down the fire button. Hold it down to maximum, and you'll send a star shooting up into the air, taking out anything that's overhead.

Although you can't *increase* your Star Power, there are plenty of surprises lying around and hidden behind rocks, which will bring you back to full power: diamonds, bones and even a new set of ears (yes, ears, you see, are what keeps Wonderdog alive). If he's struggling for a bit of energy, pick the ears up and he'll be back to full power.

The game is very *Mario*-esque, in that there are a lot of hidden blocks and passages that reveal secret rooms and bonuses. Most of these are not very well hidden, however, and more often than not you come across them by accident on your natural course through to the end of the game.

The levels vary from straightforward left to right scrollers to very big and complex ones, which give the game a real sense of challenge.

WAS THAT IT?

Trouble is, the *sense* of a challenge is all you get. The levels are pretty easy to get through and although the end-of-level baddies are very big and impressive, they don't take a lot of work to kill off. And then, when you've finished the world, you get a password.

This is all well and good, but it means you're never going to come back to that level, and even though the levels do get harder the further you get, infinite continues mean it won't take you too long to get past any difficult bits.

Programmed by Core, the same people who thought up *Chuck Rock*, the game is immensely cute and extremely nice to look at. All the sprites have character and the end-of-level baddies are very funny indeed. The parallax scrolling and detailed backgrounds add a real cartoon sense of atmosphere, and the soundtrack is real toe-tapping stuff.

If you've got a Mega CD, then this is probably the only game around at the moment that's very good all round entertainment. There are, however, only seven levels to get through and, with a password for each and infinite continues, it's not terribly challenging. The gameplay isn't difficult either. All things considered, you'll probably get two days gaming from this, and it's doubtful that you'll feel like coming back for more.

Paul Mellerick

WHAT'S WAITING FOR YOU AT THE END?

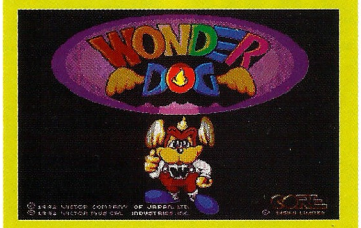
Dodge the head of the scarecrow on level one

Pop the balloons on these twins

Watch out for Big Momma's pin

Check out that stomach. Urgh!

This guy really means business



PUBLISHER: Victor (IMPORT)

PRICE: £39.99 (CHECK WITH CONTACT)

RELEASE: Out now

CARTRIDGE: Mega CD

CONTACT: Gamesville 0293 541953

Only one player

No levels of skill. The game just gets harder as you progress

You start with two lives

There's a password for each world, which makes things a bit easy

There are seven worlds

GRAPHICS 9

SOUND 10

GAMEPLAY 7

GAME SIZE 4

ADDICTION 3

"It looks great, sounds brill, and plays like a dream... for about two days, tops"

52 PERCENT

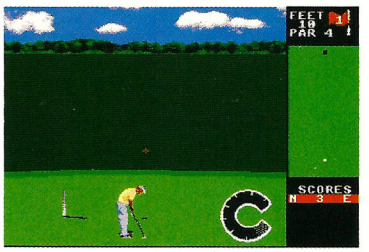
WORLD CLASS LEADERBOARD

Andy Dyer's a bit disturbed by the frequency of his double bogeys. Time to whip out his copy of *World Class Leaderboard* and clean up his act (not to mention his nose)

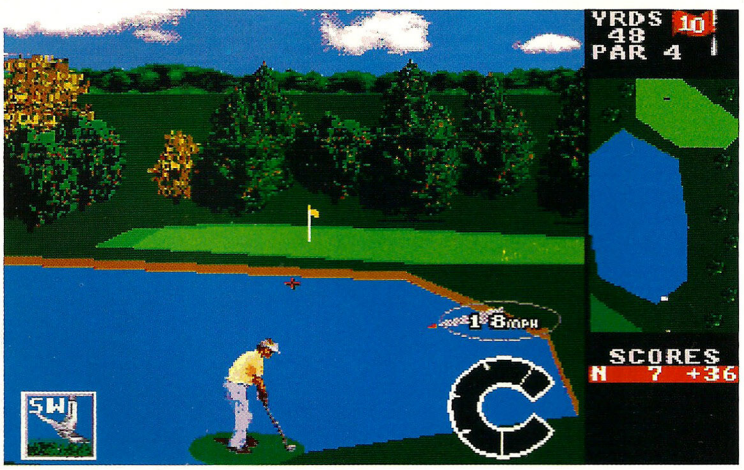
This game is the great grandfather of golf sims. It first appeared on home computers back in the mid-Eighties and, presumably because they have the rights to produce it, US Gold have decided to bring it bang up to date and slap it on the Mega Drive. "Hurrah!" I hear all the would-be Faldo's cry. "Not so fast," I reply.

You see, apart from a few small cosmetic changes, *World Class Leaderboard* has remained, in essence, the same as it ever was, a very basic golf sim. Had it been a classic game in every sense of the word (ie truly original, simple in concept but with damn near perfect gameplay, like *Tetris*) then that would have been fine. Sadly though, this is not the case with *World Class Leaderboard*, and the only reason that this game was so simplistic way back when, was because the early machines simply weren't up to the job.

This is where you choose the number of players, whether they're human or not, and their skill levels



In the appalling putting section the greens look flat but actually slope... er, but only in one direction



Just like in the older version (though completely unlike real golf) if the ball plops into the water, the local council quickly erect a small area of land for you to stand on. Very odd and not, we hasten to add, entirely accurate

MEGA DRIVE MOCKERY

This isn't true of the Mega Drive, so to simply tart up the front end and bung in a few pretty graphical touches doesn't really cut the mustard. When you're dealing with a machine with this much power, failing to use it properly is completely and utterly unforgivable. Let's take a closer look.

The putting really is poor beyond measure

OK, so you can have up to eight players, any number of whom can be human or controlled by the computer. True, there are five different courses to play on, yes, there are three different tournaments, and once you've started you get a 3D representation of the hole you're about to try out (very pretty indeed, but let's face it, not that useful).

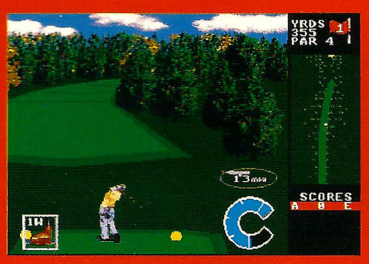
But then it's into the game itself. Well, what can I say? You've got the usual choice of clubs and a small crosshair appears to enable you to aim your shot either left or right. And that's just about it.

Unlike some of the golf games of more recent years, there's no opportunity to shift your stance or try to put spin on the ball. When you actually perform your swing, it's the usual procedure of setting the power on the meter then trying to stop it centrally on the down-sweep to perform a perfect hit. That's where the next little cosmetic change comes in.

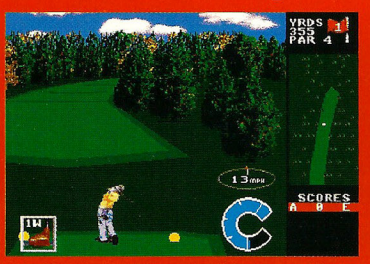
To the right of the main screen is an overhead view of the section of the hole you're currently on. When you hit the ball, the view zooms in and out (or rather out and in) as if the camera were suspended several feet above the ball. It serves the purpose of allowing you to see just how poorly you've placed a ball, and it also helps you aim your next shot in the right direction. As for greatly enhancing the gameplay in general, well, to be honest, it doesn't.

IT WENT STRAIGHT DOWN THE MIDDLE (ER, VIA NORWAY)

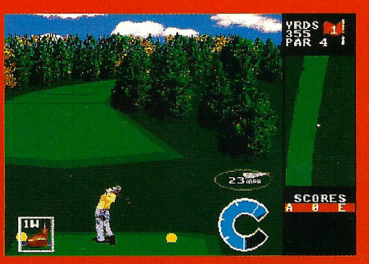
① I am lining up my shot. There are trees in the way, but I'm going over 'em. Watch the overhead



② See? I've made my shot and the overhead view is showing its trajectory in real time. Very flash!



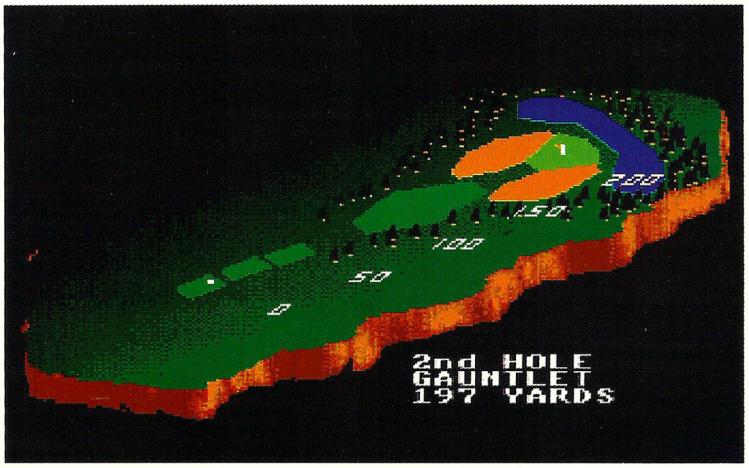
③ Er, and still my ball is travelling pretty straight (but now it's getting nearer the ground)



④ Oh dear. It looks like a freak gust has sent the ball behind the trees. Never mind, one more swipe...

GET A GRIP!

- Selects options and moves crosshair
- (A) Initiates the swing and chooses selected options from the menu
- (B) When using a pitching wedge, this selects chip shot
- (C) When using a pitching wedge, this selects punch shot



The overhead views look fab, but they doesn't really serve any useful purpose. If only as much attention had been paid to the playability of the game

PRIMITIVE PUTTING

And finally onto the the weakest section of the gameplay – the putting. This really is poor beyond measure. The greens are like plates – completely flat – but they do tilt in a certain direction, indicated by a small stick and the shadow it casts on the green. The direction of the shadow represents the direction of the slope, and the length of the shadow indicates how steep the slope is.

Unfortunately, video golfers nowadays are used to more sophisticated greens with all sorts of lumps, bumps and undulations in them. Compared to other golfing games on the market, *World Class Leaderboard* really does look primitive.

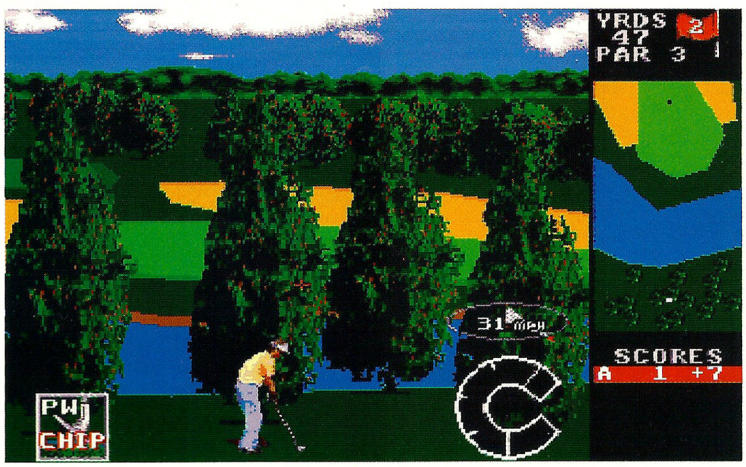
LAND, HO!

One other feature is the bizarre way in which water hazards are handled. If you put the ball in the water in real golf, it's placed just outside the hazard on your side of it (in other words away from the hole). This is also true of *World Class Leaderboard,* when the water hazard is a regular shape. But, if you put the ball in a water hazard which is long and thin and runs parallel to the fairway, a little patch of land appears in the water for you to stand on. Not really the Ryder Cup, is it?

Oh and one more thing. If you're just outside the edge of the green, you can't select a putter, and the smallest shot possible with a pitching wedge is about eight yards. So if it's a small green, you're stuffed.

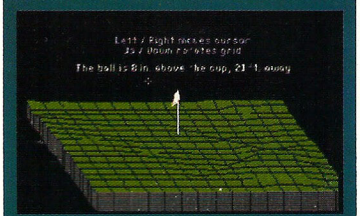
PGA Tour Golf is head and shoulders above *World Class Leaderboard.* They are, however, the only two golf games currently on the market, so golf addicts may want to try this out if only for a bit of variety. Anyone else, however, may find this game too shallow to provide any long-term fun.

Andy Dyer



If you ever get stuck behind a clump of trees (here's a clump we got stuck behind earlier), use the chip shot to send the ball up and over the top

THEN AGAIN...



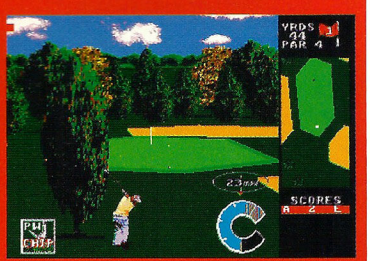
This is the sort of snazzy putting you get in *PGA Tour Golf*

If you're after a more up-to-date golfing game, it has to be *PGA Tour Golf.* It has more stats, more options and it is more playable. It also has a more impressive putting section. It's an official release, so you can buy it almost anywhere.

Well, it's not the most stimulating video game in the world, it's not even the most stimulating golfing game in the world. If, however, you're going to try it out for size anyway, this is how it's done – or not as the case may be. Just keep hacking at that ball...

(5) I dunno what happened there, but things are going horribly awry. More bleedin' trees. Plop!

(6) But wait, use the chip option so that you can "chip" the ball over trees when they're too close to you



(7) And once more, chip the little dimpled blighter onto the green. Now for some tedious putting

PUBLISHER: US Gold

PRICE: £39.99

RELEASE: December '92

CARTRIDGE: 4 Mbit

CONTACT: US Gold 021 356 3388

- Up to eight players, who can be human or computer controlled
- SKILL! Each player can play at amateur, novice or professional level
- Er, one life, just like real golfers, unless you're Giles the golfing cat
- Not a blinkin' bean. No battery back-up or password system
- No again. This is golf, so it's a series of holes over five courses

GRAPHICS 7

SOUND 6

GAMEPLAY 5

GAME SIZE 6

ADDICTION 7

"Mildly entertaining for a bit, but this is both too old and too basic to please today's video golfers"

50 PERCENT

GAME REVIEW

WHEEL OF FORTUNE

Time to make loads of money and embarrass yourself on TV? Not really. The only thing Paul Mellerick makes is the mistake of slotting this appalling game into his Mega Drive

So, it may be *Wheel of Fortune* time, but there's no sign of little old Nicky Campbell. Why? Well, because this game is based on the original American version of the programme that has become the most successful game show in the world. You would think, therefore, that the Mega Drive version of the quiz would have all the glitz, glamour, excitement and money of the game show. Well, you would be wrong, because, to be blunt, the game fails miserably to deliver.

For those of you who don't know what the Wheel of Fortune is, let's explain. The basic idea of the show is to solve a word puzzle by choosing a letter. By spinning the wheel beforehand, you determine how much money each occurrence of that letter is worth.

EASY MONEY

So, if you spin $1000 and pick a letter S, of which there are three in the puzzle, you get $3000. Simple eh?

In fact, things are a little bit trickier than that. You're allowed to pick any letter in the alphabet, but if you want a vowel, you have to pay for it – $250 in fact.

If you pick a letter that isn't in the puzzle, you lose your turn and pass the wheel over to your opponent. You then have to wait for the wheel to come back to you before you can increase your amount.

The puzzles aren't too taxing, because they often take the form of popular phrases that almost everybody knows, for example: "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush" or "too many cooks spoil the broth".

This does make the game far from difficult, but then it does give each contestant the chance to win. And how do you win? By getting the most money, that's how.

Be the first to solve the puzzle and you'll bank all your winnings. Then, after the three rounds are up, the person with the most money enters the bonus round and has a chance to win a fortune.

Once you get into the bonus round, the rules change slightly. Pick a letter from the word WHEEL to choose your prize, and then try to solve the puzzle. The computer enters the letters R, S, T, L, N and E and then you have to pick three consonants and a vowel. Solve the puzzle against the clock, and you win a prize, anything from some jewellery to a car. And that's *Wheel of Fortune*.

Will it land on the $1500 or not? Find out after a word from our sponsors

Ooh, what a shame, you missed and landed on the $400 instead

A TRULY DIRE GAME

As in the TV programme, the questions aren't very brain taxing. Even though there are 4,500 of them, they are all incredibly simple, except, that is, the one's which are so American that your average Brit doesn't have a clue what the answer is.

The graphics add to the dullness of the game. The horribly drawn characters and garish colours make the game as horrible to look at as it is to play.

If you're after a good afternoon of trivia, then you'd be better off spending your money on Trivial Pursuits and a gross of Wagon Wheels, than this pile of old nob.

Ⓜ Paul Mellerick

You can buy a vowel, solve the puzzle or spin the wheel, but seeing as you haven't got any money, you'd better spin the wheel

GET A GRIP!

Moves your cursor around when you're selecting a letter or choosing what to do next

A – Selects a new puzzle

B – Does everything – picks up a letter, spins the wheel etc.

C – Selects the displayed puzzle

PUBLISHER: GameTek (IMPORT)

PRICE: £39.99 (CHECK WITH CONTACT)

RELEASE: Out now

CARTRIDGE: 4Mbit

CONTACT: Telegames 0533 516861

One to three players, and any number can be computer controlled

Select the skill level for your computer opponents and choose your time limit

No lives, it's just win or lose

No passwords and no battery back-up

There are four rounds and 4,500 (count 'em) puzzles

GRAPHICS 2

SOUND 4

GAMEPLAY 5

GAME SIZE 8

ADDICTION 1

"There's no skill involved and the challenge is pretty much non-existent"

22 PERCENT

HOME ALONE

Macauley Culkin has made it to the MD, but would you want to be alone with this game? Amanda Dyson certainly wouldn't

PUBLISHER: Sega

PRICE: £39.99

RELEASE: December

CARTRIDGE: 4 Mbit

CONTACT: Sega 071 727 8070

One player, otherwise it wouldn't be called *Home Alone*, would it?

Two levels of skill – beginner and expert

One life that lasts 30 minutes

No save game – it doesn't last long enough to need one

There are five houses to be saved

GRAPHICS 3

SOUND 2

GAMEPLAY 1

GAME SIZE 1

ADDICTION 1

Annoying brat or annoying brat? Make up your own mind, but he's got to be one of the world's most irritatingly obnoxious superstars. And to make matters worse, he's made an absolute fortune out of being a precocious whipper-snapper, who doesn't know when to lie down and let his house get robbed.

There's nothing wrong with being annoying, famous or 14 years old, or even all three at once, but there is a problem when there are thousands of other youngsters eagerly awaiting the *Home Alone* computer game, and boy are they going to be disappointed.

FUN FILM, CRAP CART

You could be forgiven for thinking that the game of the biggest grossing comedy of all time would be a right royal riot of a romp, but sadly, it's yet another pitiful excuse for a software house to cash in on the mass hysteria produced by an over-hyped and over-rated film.

The two crooks are on their way to rob five houses and you have to frustrate their criminal antics until the police arrive. You have to collect weapons and ammunition by driving a sledge into the snowmen that are scattered around the gardens. Before the crooks break into a house, you can go in first and set fiendish traps. But if they get in before you, all you have to do is shoot them with a BB gun, pepper shooter or snowball bazooker. The weapon you use depends on the gagdets you've collected – you can get more ammo inside the houses (see the GRAB IT circle for a few hints).

When the crooks' pain threshold has been reached, usually after about 20 hits or so, you are deemed to have saved the house, and the crooks move onto the next residence. If they grab all the loot, that's bad news for you and you get fewer bonus points at the end of the game. And that's all there is to it.

Oh woe is me. The bad guys have flooded one of the houses. Disaster. Lucky there are only three minutes left until the boys in blue turn up

It's far too simplistic

The game moves at an appallingly pedestrian pace, the controls are unresponsive, the graphics and animation are decidedly sad. There is no depth to the gameplay and it's far too simplistic. If it's been designed to appeal to the younger Home Alone viewers, then it's downright insulting; if it hasn't, then the game designers should be... Well, why don't you have a quick play and then decide their fate for yourself?

DON'T DO IT!

If I had one wish, it would be to visit every Mega Drive owner in person and tell them not to buy this grotesquely over-priced and pathetically under-developed mockery of a game. It's not merely a bad game, it's a total embarrassment to the entire world of Mega Drive gaming.

When you compare this pitiful effort to the likes of *Sonic*, *Desert Strike* and *EA Hockey*, there is absolutely nothing to recommend about it.

Rent the Home Alone video ten times before you even think about buying the game. Home Alone? I'd rather be on my own with a sex-starved sabre-toothed tiger than spend ten minutes alone with this cart. Yeeeeuch.

Ⓜ *Amanda Dyson*

They'll be dancing in the streets now that the cops have arrived. Well done Macauley, you've saved five houses and now it's the end of the game

When the bad guys catch Macauley, they hang him on a hook on the wall. I thought Home Alone was supposed to be comedy

GET A GRIP!

Moves Macauley around

Takes you to the select weapon screen when in a house

Fires weapon when in a house

Jumps when in a house

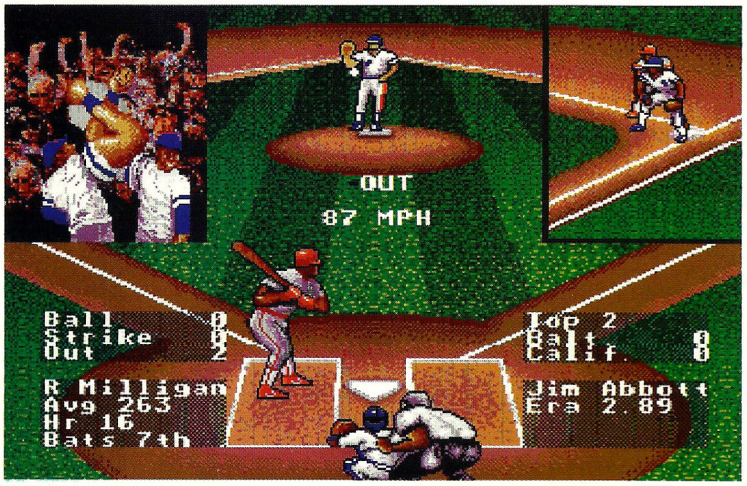
Any button makes the sledge go faster

"Yet another wasted film licence and yet another cart with massive potential to rip off unsuspecting game buyers. Disgraceful"

24 PERCENT

RBI BASEBALL 4

Standing on a pitcher's mound sounds awfully unpleasant. Andy Dyer does it anyway, and doesn't like the way it feels



This is the main screen. And that box (top left) shows weird little crowd scenes and animations. But why have these guys got Gargantuan arms?

Hot on the heels of *Sports Talk Baseball*, which got 74% in the first issue of MEGA, comes *RBI Baseball 4*. Yep, it's yet another baseball simulation, so how does it shape up against the competition? Not brilliantly, I'm afraid. There's nothing really wrong with it, it just doesn't feel quite right.

At the start of the game you're faced with an options screen from which you can select the type of game you want, whether it be a single game, a Home Run Derby, or a whole season, amongst others. Then you decide whether you want to play the computer, a friend, or simply sit back and watch the computer play itself (dull, or what?). Righty ho, into the game itself then.

BATTY BATTERS

The first problem you encounter is that the opponents are, well, a bit dim. Yes, they're very good at hitting and fielding, but when they're actually batting, most of them will swing at a pitch even if it's veering about three miles away from the base plate.

OK, if it were you or I playing ball in the park, it would be understandable for us to panic at the sight of a speeding ball and swipe regardless. These guys, however, are supposed to be professionals, so they ought to be able to tell if a pitch is way off target and let it go because (for those of you who don't know) a crap pitch that is left alone is called a "ball", and four crap pitches in a row mean that the batter gets to walk to first base, unhindered.

Another thing that can really get your goat is the way fielding is handled. When the ball is in flight, the fielders come under your control. In most ball games, the guy nearest the ball will be the one you control. In this game, however, they *all* come under your control simultaneously.

Now (bear with me), most of the time one of your fielders will automatically be in a good position to catch the ball, so you can leave it well alone. Occasionally, though, when this is not the case, you'll start chasing the ball with one guy, realise he's not going to get it, then annoyingly discover that there was already a guy in position, but you've unknowingly just moved him out of the way while he was still off screen. It doesn't happen all the time, but it is frequent enough to frustrate you a bit.

HANGING SAD

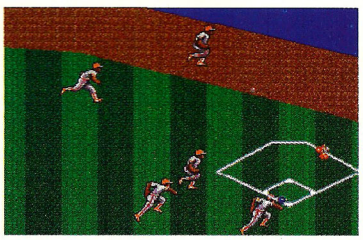
In the *Sports Talk Baseball* review in issue one of MEGA, we said that baseball games were all much of a muchness, and this is true. Unfortunately, *RBI Baseball 4* doesn't quite hang together as well as the other games out there. So, if you're only going to get one baseball cart, you may be better off going for one of the others.

Obsessive baseballers may still want to try it out, but be prepared for a slightly less than satisfying game.

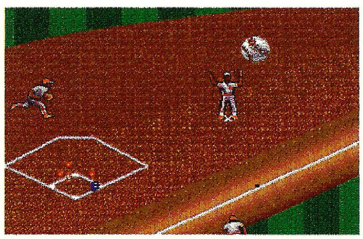
Ⓜ Andy Dyer

GET A GRIP!

- ↑ ↓ ← → Selects options and moves players
- A Makes the batter swing his bat and makes the pitcher pitch the ball – couldn't be easier really, could it?
- B Can be used to throw the ball when your team is fielding
- C Places the batter's bat in a position from which he can bunt the ball



When you control the fielders, they all move at once – very poor indeed



When fielding, a cross appears and your catcher automatically goes to it

THEN AGAIN...

***Sports Talk Baseball* is one of the other available options**

Having said that "all baseball games are the bloody same anyway" in issue one of MEGA, it now has to be said that this one's not quite that good.

So, if you're only buying one baseball game, go for *Hardball*, *Super League* or *Sports Talk Baseball* instead of *RBI Baseball 4*.

PUBLISHER: Tengen (IMPORT)

PRICE: £39.99 (CHECK WITH CONTACT)

RELEASE: Out now

CARTRIDGE: 8 Mbit

CONTACT: Telegames 0533 516861

One or two players, and you can watch the computer play itself

SKILL! Three difficulty levels, and the computer defence gets faster

Lives, in baseball? Give us a break

No battery back-up, but there are passwords

Again, you don't have levels in baseball

GRAPHICS 7

SOUND 6

GAMEPLAY 7

GAME SIZE 8

ADDICTION 6

"Pretty much as feature packed as any other baseball game out there, but it simply doesn't work quite as well"

65 PERCENT

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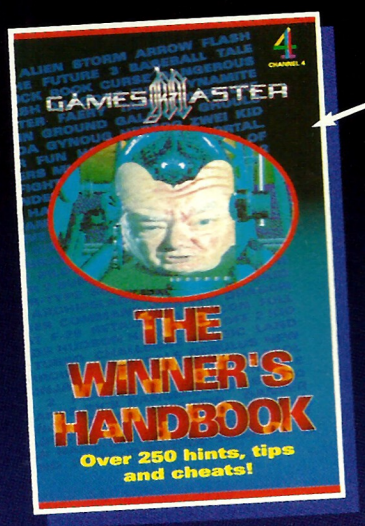

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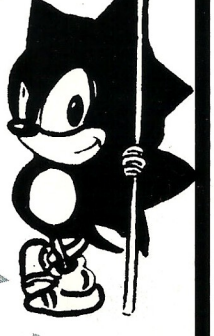

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MEGA PLAY

Hello, good evening and welcome back to MEGA PLAY, the section of the magazine which can make you feel, and look, an all-round better gamesplayer

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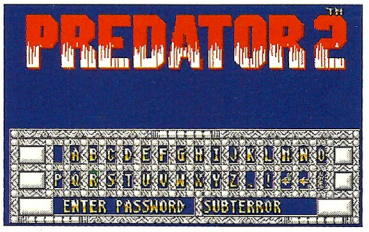


These passwords will make short work of this game

All right, all right. I know the game's quite easy, but some people are having trouble with it. So, here are all the passwords for you from a very kind ***Stuart Lowe*** of Long Eaton, Nottingham, and an equally kind ***Darren Allen*** also of Nottingham, who sent in his passwords at the same time. Well done lads.

Level 2 – KILLERS
Level 3 – CAMOUFLAGE
Level 4 – LOS ANGELES (including space)
Level 5 – SUBTERROR
Level 6 – TOTAL BODY (including space)

STEEL EMPIRE

Not a bad little shoot-'em-up, but it may be a bit easy. Stick it on the hard level and then try these tips.

First up, here's a level select. Go into the options menu and listen to sound one twice, sound nine once and sound two twice. A "Round Entry" option will now appear.

If you just fancy skipping level one, hold down button B and press Start on the title screen – though why you'd want to do this when you've got a level select is beyond me.

DAVID ROBINSON'S SUPREME COURT BASKETBALL

If you wanna slam dunk like Robinson, enter this password

Here are some codes to get you through to the final in this OK basketball game.

CABCDEA1F – Los Angeles vs Detroit
ASTURBQIE – Chicago vs New York
FMJCLJY1B – New York vs Detroit
WYBCDEAYU – Detroit vs Los Angeles

ALTERED BEAST

Here are a couple of tips for this scrolling left to right beat-'em-up game which used to come free with your Mega Drive.

For infinite continues press Start and A on the title screen, and for an options screen press B and Start on the title screen.

DESERT STRIKE

If you can't complete *Desert Strike* with ten lives, then you really are crap

The code for five lives (TQQQLOM) has been around for a long time. It was originally in the manual which you got with the game, so it's not much of a tip these days really, is it?

But, here's the password for ten lives. Enter BQQQAEZ and start your mission. Check your stats screen for all those lives.

SHADOW DANCER

Now, when was the last time you saw a woman explode, eh?

When battling the second, third or fourth boss, save one energy unit and wait for the timer to count down to 59 seconds or less. Don't press any buttons and the screen will go blank, giving you loads of points.

DRAGON'S FURY

Enter UUBV99BQRE for 73 balls and 505, 705, 300 points or enter ALCLAE8ECK for 21 balls and the end-of-game sequence.

STAR CHEAT

See what MEGA does for you? You send in some tips, we print them and you win a cart (sorry folks, we're all out of Game Gears).

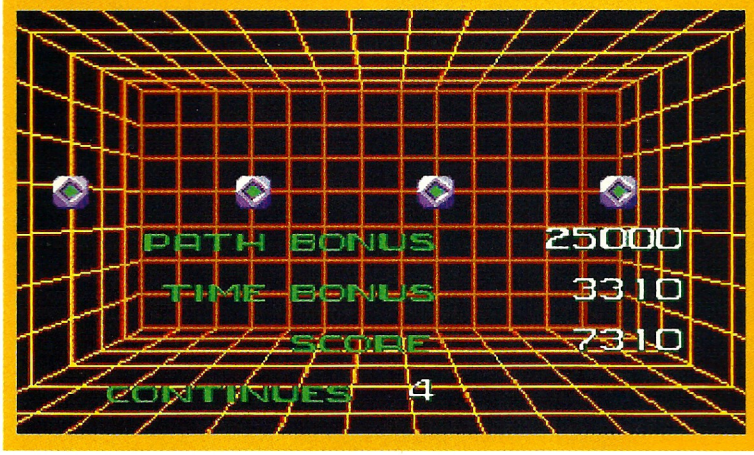
This month's winner is *Mr Moss* from Macclesfield for his rather good and very comprehensive *Arcus Odyssey* tips.

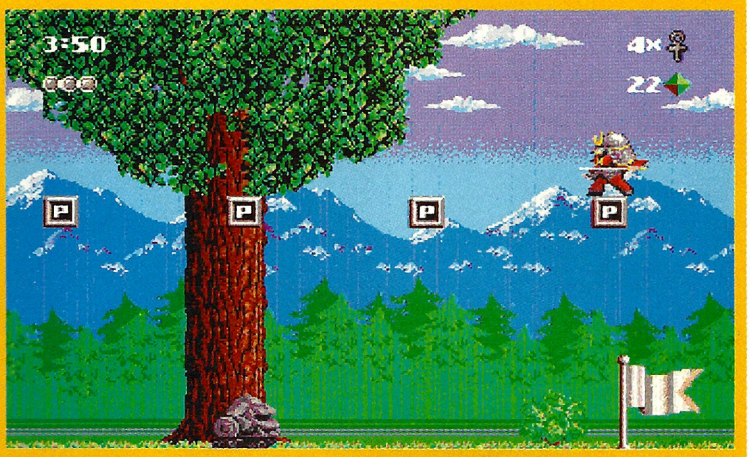
Unfortunately Mr Moss, you didn't notify us of your full address, and until you do, we'll just have to hang on to your Game Gear. Please let us know in writing to MEGA PLAY, MEGA, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW. (No bogus letters please, 'cos we've already got a sample of the winner's handwriting.)

KID CHAMELEON

Work your way through to Blue Lake Woods II and get to the end, but don't touch the flag. Get up on the last block and press Down-Right while holding down the jump and special buttons.

Do this and you'll warp right to the last boss. Yes, the very last boss. If you want to know how to beat him, check out the MEGA MEDIC on page 77 of this issue of MEGA.





Above: These blocks are too high up for you to jump onto when you are standing on the ground. You'll have to go back to a ledge and then jump on them

Left: To prove that the tip does work, here's the point screen, which shows you've got 25,000 points just for finding the path. Now isn't that nice?

ALESTE

Load up, and then on the title screen press reset. Then hold down Left until the title screen comes back up. You should now be able to choose your level.

SHADOW OF THE BEAST

Nice scenery, shame about the actual game

Play the game and get on the high score table. Enter your name as ZQX and press and hold A, B, C and Start until you get back into the game. Now, when your life counter gets down to 0, it will reset itself back to 11 or 12.

This means you'll never die. Be careful though, because if you fall down a hole, you'll have to re-set the game and start all over again.

DARIUS II

To become invincible (very useful for a shoot-'em-up), press A, B, A, C, B, C, C, B, C, A, B, A on the title screen. If the cheat has worked, the words NO HIT will appear on screen.

BART VS THE SPACE MUTANTS

Don't go in there mate, they're showing Saturday Night Fever

Thanks to ***Michael Allen*** from Nottingham, who has noticed that if you stand outside the cinema doors on level one, and wait until your timer counts down to 400, a small boy dressed in purple will walk out. Spray him red, and you'll have one less purple thing to worry about. Don't wait outside the door from the start though, because you'll waste too much time.

DEVILISH

A nice little game this, made easier with this tip. Hold down A, B, C and Left on the title screen and press Start. You'll now have 99 balls to play with. How's that for a tip?

SHOVE IT

This is an obscure Genesis puzzle game which is only available on import. Enter !AYASAM! on the password screen to get to the last level.

IT'S CLASSIC TIP TIME

You wouldn't believe the amount of tips we receive which must be at least a year old. So, rather than ignore all the people who send them in, each month we are going to print one. You may have read it a thousand times before in all the other mags, but you never know, one of you out there just might have missed it.

This month's classic tip is for *Sonic the Hedgehog*, and it's been sent in by *J O'Donnell* of London (now you know who to blame).

On the title screen, when Sonic is waving his finger, press Up, Down, Left and Right. You should hear a chime. Now hold down A and press Start for a level select screen.

If this is the first you've ever heard of this tip, you can look forward to being the last to know about another equally classic tip in next month's issue of MEGA.

What, you mean there's a level select cheat on *Sonic*? I must have been living on Mars for the last two years

ARCUS ODYSSEY

This is a rather lengthy tip, but all you *Arcus Odyssey* fans will probably be very glad that Mr Moss was kind enough to send it in, and he'll be glad that he's won a Game Gear.

Enter these passwords to control each of the four characters on each act.

DIANA FIREYA:

Act 2 – GJEIACRT
Act 3 – GJWZAIAEKM
Act 4 – GIRCTQIJ1X
Act 5 – IISDUXIPUI
Act 6 – IIUHUZMRNZ
Act 7 – IIXBUYIUGW
Act 8 – IJXBUZJOHB

ERIN GASHUNA:

Act 2 – HIJAAIAABB
Act 3 – IHIIYAIAGC3
Act 4 – IHIIAOOIKDK
Act 5 – IHIKAQYIOUZ
Act 6 – IHIKEQYIRVC
Act 7 – IHIKEQYIVOH
Act 8 – IHJKBQYIZPK

JEDDA CHIEF:

Act 2 – GDHAAIAABZ
Act 3 – GIEIAAAECA
Act 4 – GJEECAIIL1Q
Act 5 – IJCECJIOUO
Act 6 – KICBEPIQ3F
Act 7 – KICBHIIVWG
Act 8 – KJCBHNIYXR

BEAD SHIA:

Act 2 – FAZHAIADRR
Act 3 – FI4IAIAESB
Act 4 – HK3CDIILDO
Act 5 – HLODAQIPMX
Act 6 – HNODESIVWZ
Act 7 – HNODESIZX5
Act 8 – KRODEZIZX5

Send your tips and cheats to the usual address

SPLATTERHOUSE 2

Oi, Rick, wake up you lazy git. You've got to rescue your girlie

If you press A, B, C and Start together while playing *Splatterhouse 2*, you'll reset the game. So, watch out, you'd better be careful.

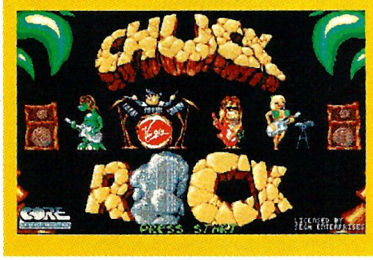
Turn Over

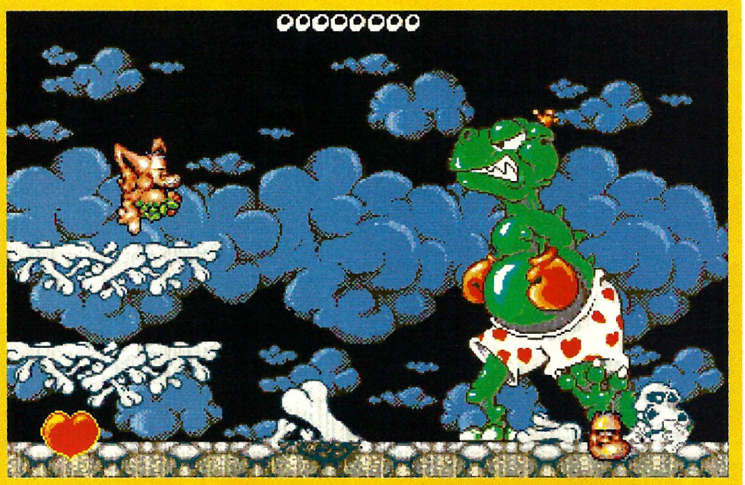
CHUCK ROCK

Load up *Chuck Rock* and wait for the band to start playing. Now, enter ABRACADABRA using the buttons and the direction pad (Down for D and Right for R). If you've done it right, the guitarist will smile at you. Now press A, B and C together and he'll smile again.

Now start the game and press Up while holding down A to advance a level or press Right and A to advance one stage.

If you make a mistake, press Down and A to go back a level or Left and A to go back a stage.





So, you've used the cheat and you're at the end. Just to prove that it does work, look at the score at the top of the screen. Yep, no points. But now you've got there, how are you going to beat him? Well, if you look back at issue two of MEGA, you'll find a *Chuck Rock* RIP 'N' TIP complete solution

FORGOTTEN WORLDS

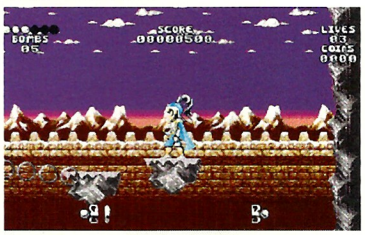
Select the two-player game and when a player dies, press Start several times for infinite continues.

ARNOLD PALMER'S TOURNAMENT GOLF

Ooh, that's a big number one club you've got there Mr Palmer

For a little game of *Fantasy Zone* on your Mega Drive, just do the following. Take 100 shots on any hole and the Game Over message will appear. Press A, B, C and Up together to find it.

THE LEGEND OF GALAHAD



Here you are on level three and it's amazing how it looks like level one. Still, you've only got seven levels to go before you rescue the princess

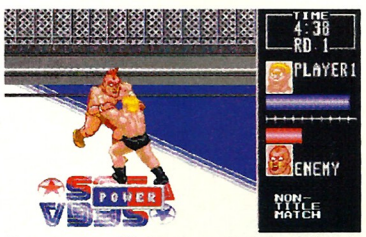
If you are having some trouble getting past level one, or level two for that matter, check out these passwords.

To get to level two enter ZXSP and to reach level three the password is LVFT.

MERCS

For a bit more of a challenge on this *Commando* rip-off, enter the Original Mode and hold down A, B and C. Now press Start to heat things up a bit.

WRESTLE WAR



Excuse me Mr Enemy, do you mind if I have this dance? Oof, OK then, maybe not tonight

This is a pretty obvious tip, but thanks go to ***Matthew Kirby*** from Stockport anyway for sending it in.

If you've got an auto-fire joypad, switch it over to auto when you're grappling with your opponent.

Now, you should have no trouble getting through the rounds and becoming world wrestling champion.

THUNDERFORCE III

This one's a bit tough to start with, but use this cheat and things become so much easier

This is another classic tip, but we had a letter from somebody asking us to print it. So, if you don't know it already, you're about to find out

Pause the game and press Up ten times, Down, B, Down, B, Down and B. Now press B to get all the weapons, and press A to get the claw.

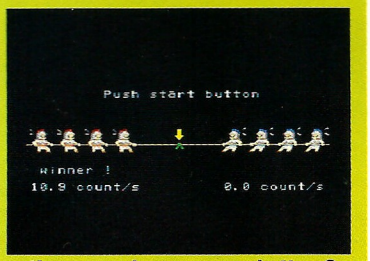
WARRIOR OF ROME II

If you're in need of a break from all the strategy action in this real-time war simulation, then this little tip for a two-player game of tug-of-war could be just the thing.

Start a new game and press Start on pad one. On the selection window go down to the load data line and move the cursor over to the right-hand side of the line. Using control pad two, press and hold the Start button and push button A on control pad one.

The tug of war game will appear. Press Start on pad one and away you go. Press button C on each pad and see who wins.

How do you turn a boring strategy sim into a rivetting game of tug-of-war? Simple, just use the tip printed above...



... then see who can press button C the fastest, you or your opponent. Now, having wound down a bit, you can carry on with the game

GAME GENIE AND ACTION REPLAY CODES

Just for all you "cheaters" out there, here's a selection of codes for both the Action Replay and the new Game Genie.

ACTION REPLAY

Special thanks to the person who sent in these passwords, but forgot to write down his name and address. Well, I guess you know who you are.

Dick Tracy:
FFFD6 B0003 – Infinite lives
Ghouls 'n' Ghosts:
FFB04 90030 – Infinite lives
Klax:
FF0FD D0014 – Infinite lives
Outrun:
FFFE1 50099 – Time set with last two digits
Rambo:
FFC10 30085 – Infinite lives
Super Hang-On:
FF055 40099 – Time set with last two digits
Krusty's Super Fun House:
FF0FF 30003 – Infinite lives
Splatterhouse 2:
FF00F 80003 – Infinite lives
FF00F 70004 – Infinite energy
Taz-Mania:
FFD45 B0003 – Infinite lives
FFD4B C000C – Infinite energy
FFD03 70002 – Infinite chilli peppers
FFD4C B0002 – Invulnerability
Two Crude Dudes:
FF46C B0002 – Infinite lives

GAME GENIE

OK, so you've got your infinities with the Action Replay, now it's the Game Genie's turn, courtesy of MEGA PLAY.

Arnold Parmer Golf:
BCRT – BE4A – Opponents always par a hole
ACRT – BE4A – Opponents always birdie a hole
Columns:
DYKA – AA62 – Can't pause the game
DJ Boy:
BCZA – JA94 – Infinite lives
CKBA – JA8N – All items in the shop are free
SHFA – MAWY – All coins are worth 160
Hardball:
AK5T – AA7R – Infinite strikes
AF5T – AA6A – Infinite balls
John Madden Football '92:
CBEA – C6CA – Each quarter lasts 60 minutes
BC7T – BE5J – Extra point is worth eight points
BC6T – AAFR –Seven plays to get a first down
Phantasy Start III:
ETBA – AA88 – Master Code
XYCBA – C9G6 – Start with 4,000 mesata
9MTA – CCGN – Start with 250 hit points
Streets of Rage:
BEMT – BA7W – Start with nine players
AJ4T – AA34 – Infinite lives

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 2

The MEGA team's jaws dropped open when it became apparent that *Sonic 2* was really rather tough to finish. In view of this, we now bring you the complete *Sonic 2* solution. OK, so the game's not out until 24 November, but when it does hit the shelves, you may well need all the help you can get. If you want to sweat over the game yourself, don't read on...

PUBLISHER: Sega

PRICE: £39.99

RELEASE: November '92

CARTRIDGE: 12 Mbit

MEGA SAYS:
Many things about *Sonic 2* are the same as the original, but just as many things are different. That's the real beauty of this game – you'll feel immediately comfortable with it, and once you've found your way in, you'll find lots of surprises.

Basically, there are more zones, Robotnik has improved his ships, and there are more little creatures out to get you than ever before.

Robotnik's ships are more inventive than before, and they're armed with some serious weaponry. Robotnik can be killed in the same way as before, by bouncing on his head, but actually getting at his head is much harder than before. MEGA takes Robotnik apart zone by zone and shows you the best ways to deal with him.

In the original *Sonic the Hedgehog*, every zone has three acts, the third one being the Robotnik level. This gives you a total of twelve chances to get into the special stage. But, because you can enter the special stage whenever you like in *Sonic 2*, some zones now have only two acts, which means you can come across Robotnik unexpectedly.

As well as telling you how to beat him, MEGA is also going to show you how many acts each zone has, so you'll know when to expect a Robotnik confrontation.

GET A GRIP!

Controls Sonic as he moves around the screen

A B C Uses the Sonic spin attack

Press down and then a spin button to make Sonic spin from a standing start

S Pauses the game to give you a bit of a breather from the action

EMERALD HILL ZONE TWO ACTS

It's taken just over a year for the sequel to appear, and during all that time Robotnik has been busy building new and even more dangerous machines with which to squash poor old Sonic.

In the first zone Robotnik immediately shows he means business by turning up in his patent-applied-for Sonic Crusher Four-Wheel Buggy (with optional electric windows). Watch out for the spike at the front of his buggy and bounce on him twice as he drives across the screen. If you're quick enough, you can even try to get another hit in as he's going off screen. You'll know when he's about to die, because he'll fire his "pointy thing" at you. It's easy to avoid and he only needs to be hit one more time before he blows up. Unfortunately (for you that is), he transforms back into his personal helicopter and flies off to the next level. Rescue your mates, and get on with it Sonic.

And here we go. Robotnik flies into his device using his personal helicopter. Don't worry about the number of rings that you've got, because he's not really that hard. Just follow this technique

You can actually bounce on Robotnik three times for every time he appears on screen. Bounce twice in succession by holding down a spin button and directing Sonic towards him

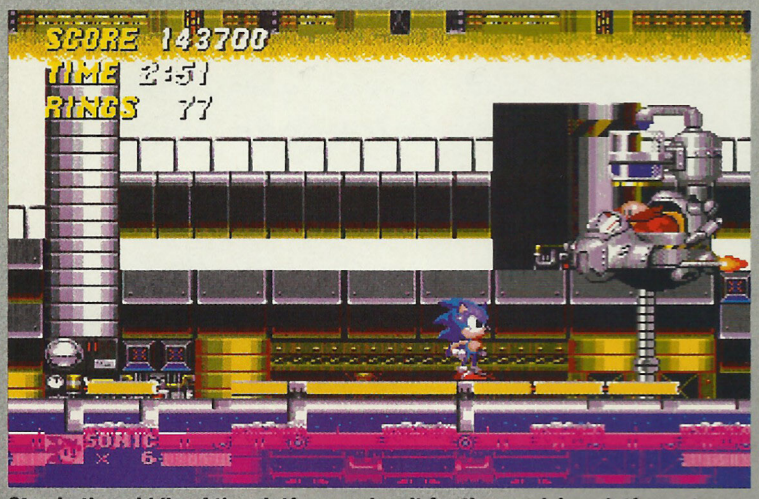
Then run to the end of the screen and bounce just as Robotnik disappears. Robotnik can take eight hits on most levels, so this first one shouldn't take too long to finish off

With one hit to go Robotnik knows he's going to be defeated and has one more go at you by firing his pointy end at you. Jump over it and bounce on him, then go to the right and rescue your friends

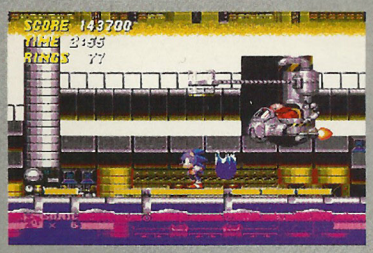
CHEMICAL PLANT ZONE TWO ACTS

The Chemical Plant covers a large area, and all that pink water everywhere makes for a very tricky zone indeed. The real problem with Robotnik on this level is the revolving platforms, which revolve around and then pause, meaning that you can only stand on them for a short time.

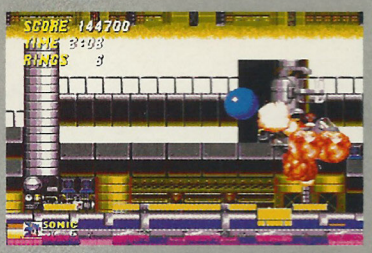
Robotnik fills up his machine with "gloop" and tries to give Sonic a shower. Hit him twice while he is filling up, but be sure to time your attacks correctly or you'll fall in and die. Dodging the gloop that Robotnik tries to dump on you is easy, so just keep up a rhythm, and you'll be fine. When you defeat Robotnik don't jump off straightaway, because there's a platform off screen which revolves. Edge to the right and check out when it's safe to jump.



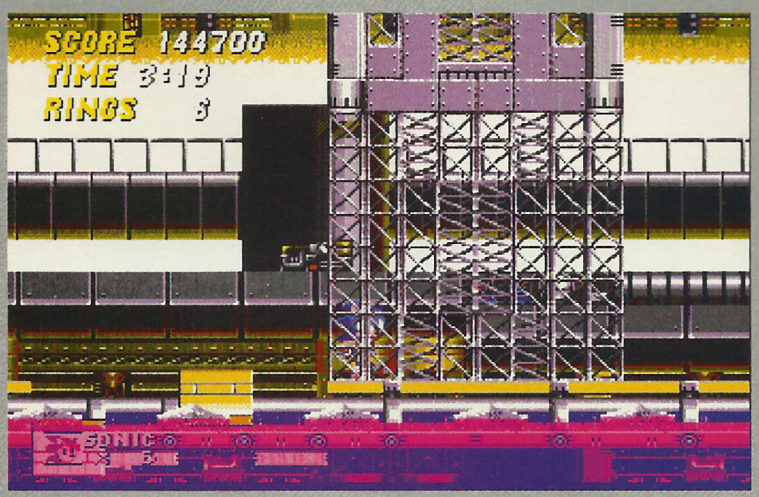
Stay in the middle of the platform and wait for the revolving platforms to turn the right way around, then attack Robotnik with a couple of spins. Don't get over-ambitious, however, because a couple of hits is enough. If you take too many hits, the platforms will disappear and you'll die



Robotnik only attacks you by dropping that 'orrible gloop. It's easy to avoid, but just stay in the middle and out of harm's way



Keep attacking Robotnik when he's filling up with gloop. He can only take about eight hits before he explodes, but it's not over yet....

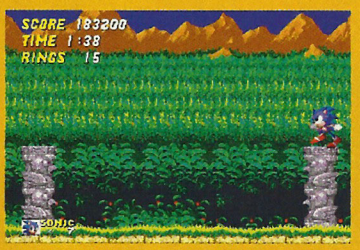


Don't get too complacent about this second defeat, because there's still one small hurdle to cross, in the shape of one revolving platform, off-screen. Slowly move towards the edge, and you'll be able to see it. Time your jump correctly, and everything's hunky-dory

AQUATIC RUIN ZONE TWO ACTS

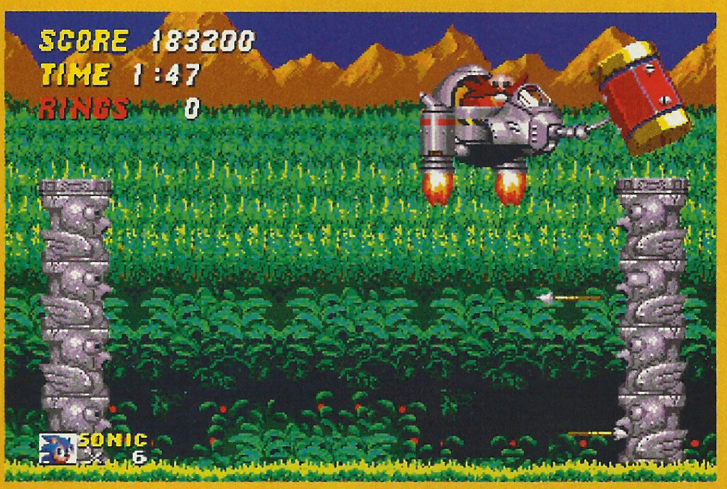
This is arguably the toughest zone, because of all the water, which doesn't allow Sonic many chances to get some much needed air. The best way to get through this level is to stay out of the water, by navigating your course along the top scenery and not falling down until the end of the level.

When you get to the end of act two, Robotnik has got a real surprise waiting for you. Run over to the right-hand side of the screen and two totem poles will rise out of the ground. Jump on top of the right-hand one very quickly. Now stay there while Robotnik goes over to the other side. On his way back, hit him and bounce back to the pole. Then, as he's about to hit you (with his hammer), jump and hit him again. Repeat this four times, and you're through to the next zone.

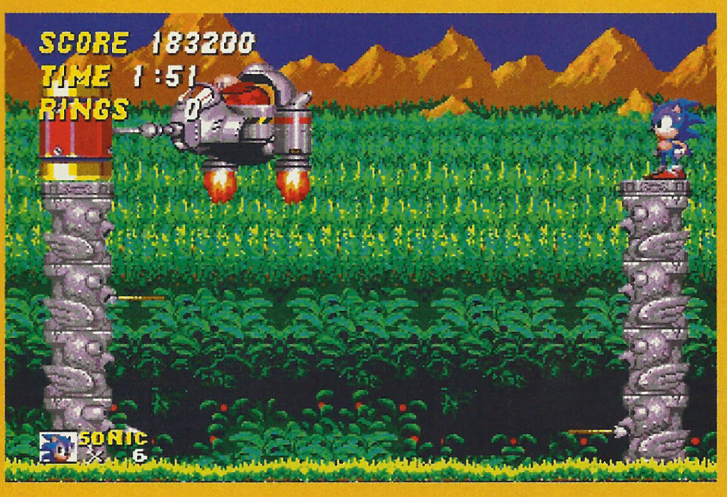


You have to be quick here or you'll never get on top of the pole. Just stand here and wait for Robotnik to appear from the top of the screen

Bounce on him and spin back over to the left-hand pole. Time the jump so that you hit Robotnik as he is about to hit you with the hammer



Here he is about to hit poor old Sonic with his very big hammer. Luckily, you've jumped out of the way (Sonic is off screen at the moment) and you'll hit him again on the way down. Then all you have to do is bounce off and land back on the totem pole. Easy this, isn't it?



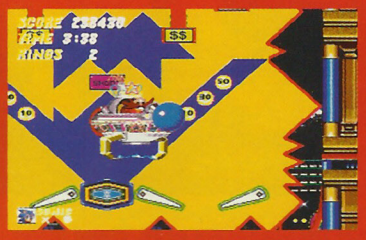
Don't be tempted to fall off and climb up the arrows, because you're much safer on top. Bounce on Robotnik as many times as you can when he's not facing you, but watch out for the hammer

CASINO NIGHT ZONE TWO ACTS

This is a lovely zone, and one which is very similar to the Spring Yard Zone in the original game. If you fancy a bit of a break from the usual *Sonic* action, take part in the fruit machine game on the first act. Not only can you get some rings, but you can have a laugh as well. But, on to Robotnik.

It's pinball time! Use the bouncy start at the top and middle of the screen to make Sonic spin-attack, then guide him down towards Robotnik. He moves left and right in sequence, so defeating him shouldn't be too hard.

Spin from the bottom and send Sonic upward. Now bounce off the stars to keep you up...



... then fall down on Robotnik. Repeat this until he dies. If you fall down though...

... spin around and again use a standing spin to get from the bottom back up the top

It takes a bit of practice, but it's not too hard to beat old Robot features. Then you can move on

HILL TOP ZONE TWO ACTS

This zone looks very similar to the original Green Hill Zone, only it's got more hills.

The end of act two is very fiery indeed, but it's also very easy. Bounce on Robotnik as soon as he appears. If you're fast enough and don't hold down the spin button, Sonic can get in six hits. Jump off him quickly and over to the left-hand side of the screen, because as Robotnik dives, he sends two fireballs into the air, setting two of the platforms alight. And as we all know, Sonic doesn't like fire. Stay safe on the left-hand side, and when Robotnik emerges, do it all over again.

Robotnik really is quite easy to beat on this level. Jump and bounce on him straight away

Then jump across and avoid the fireballs, which will set the platform alight

Move to the other side, as Robotnik will appear over here. Repeat what you did before...

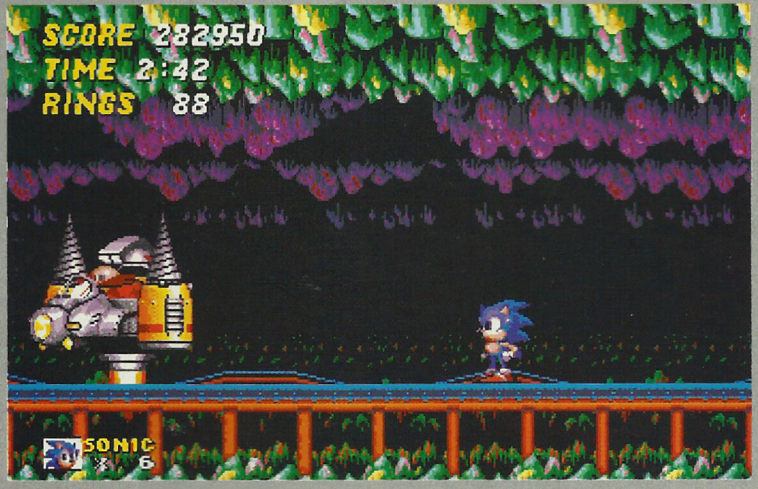
... and then take great delight in blowing up Robotnik again. Be careful jumping over the fire though

MYSTIC CAVE ZONE TWO ACTS

This is an extremely tough zone and an equally tough Robotnik is to be found at the end.

Here's a little tip for you though. At the very end of act two, you'll come across a lamppost. If you've got more than 50 rings, don't go into the secret stage. If you do, you'll lose the number of rings you've got and you won't be able to get any more when you come out. And you'll need all the rings you can get when you come up against Robotnik.

Run right to the end of the zone and as Robotnik burrows down to you in his mole machine, bits will start falling on top of you. Avoid these, by carefully moving left and right. When Robotnik falls through, wait until he drops his two boring machines and then jump twice on his head. Do this four times and he should fly off. Defeated.



Don't jump on Robotnik as soon as he comes down. Wait until he drops his boring spikes and then hit him twice just to be safe. The really difficult bit here is avoiding the spikes that fall down as Robotnik burrows through the top of the screen

Having not entered the secret stage, you lose only your rings when you are hit. Never mind, you can pick up some more before they disappear off screen. Just remember to avoid the spikes falling down and don't worry about the rocks, because strangely they don't harm Sonic at all

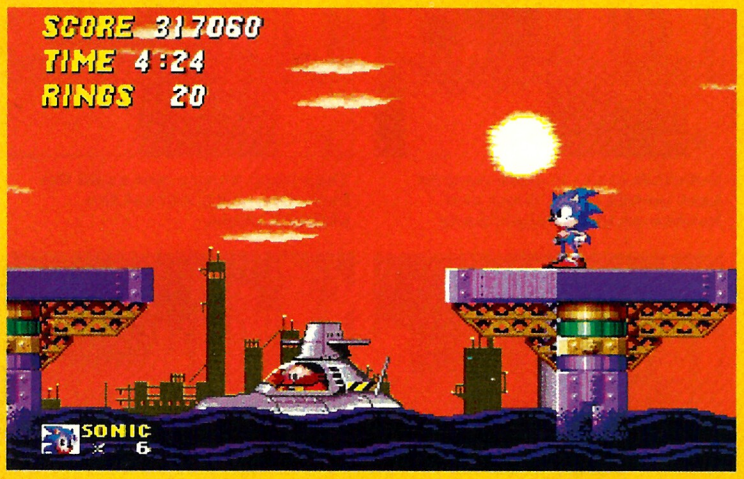
Perhaps the best way to avoid the spikes is to stand still and avoid them by gently tapping left or right on the joypad

Just hit Robotnik twice each time he appears on screen, and he's off. This level is easy – it's just about avoiding the spikes

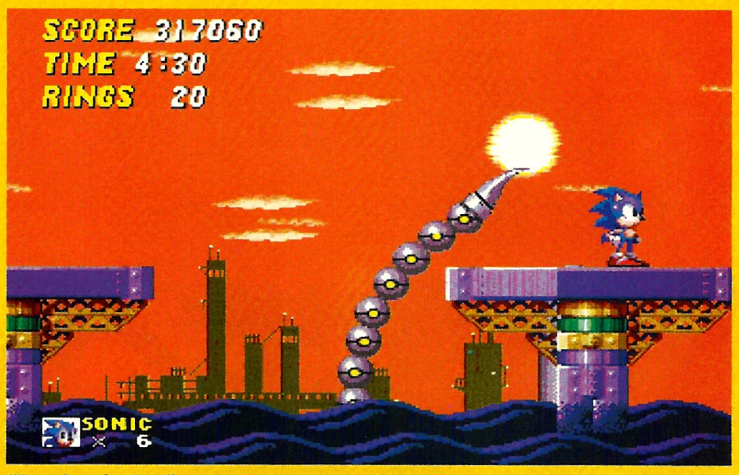
OIL OCEAN ZONE TWO ACTS

This is a very big level, which promises to get very difficult before you get to the end. Once there, however, you'd better be prepared for more than just an angry Robotnik.

As well as dealing with Robotnik, you have to dodge a claw-snake and a laser gun. When Robotnik appears, jump on him three times and then stand on the far right side. Dodge the claw (only the hook of it can actually do any damage), and then the laser appears. Stand still, and the first shot will go over your head. The next shot is aimed at your body, so jump over it. The last shot heats up the platform you're standing on, so simply jump over this and you'll be fine. Get as many hits in on Robotnik as you can, and just repeat this until he once again bites the dust.



Hit Robotnik a couple of times as soon as he pokes his ship out of the oil. You can probably get two hits in before he disappears. Then get ready to avoid the other things he throws at you



The claw is the first thing to appear. Just jump over the actual claw and not the snake-like body. Stand in the corner and jump over it as it's about to hit you – it doesn't home in on you or anything like that and it is, in fact, pretty bloody easy to avoid, so there

Next up is the laser, which fires three times. Jump over one, duck the next and then jump again

Hit Robotnik again as he emerges and bounce back onto the platform, because Sonic doesn't like oil

SKY CHASE ZONE ONE ACT

Robotnik's a bit miffed because you've destroyed his plans for world domination, so he runs back to base. Luckily, your partner sees him and comes to pick you up in a bi-plane. You stand on top of the plane and controls its actions – don't worry, you can't fall off.

There isn't an end of level here, you just have to avoid the enemies and get to the end, which is Robotnik's big base.

Not a lot happens on the Sky Chase zone. Just collect some rings and spin attack anything that gets in your way. The large turtles don't hurt you, but the mini ones riding on top of them are decidedly dangerous

METROPOLIS ZONE THREE ACTS

This is the only zone which has three acts, and they're all big. You can be assured, however, that you've got more to worry about than just big levels. There are some really tough creatures here, so be careful.

When you get through to Robotnik, you'll notice eight balls revolving around his ship. When you hit him on his head, he'll release one of these and a decoy bubble will appear. Hit this once to burst it and Robotnik will attack you again. Do this for all eight balls and then Robotnik fires a very powerful laser at you. Hit him once more and you've finished.

Wait for the ship to get close to the ground and then jump over it. As it rises back up to the top...

... hit the underside. One of the revolving balls will fall off, and you need to burst it

When you've done all eight (no mean feat), get ready to avoid Robotnik's big laser gun

You only need to hit him once more, so don't rush into it. Wait for the right moment and jump

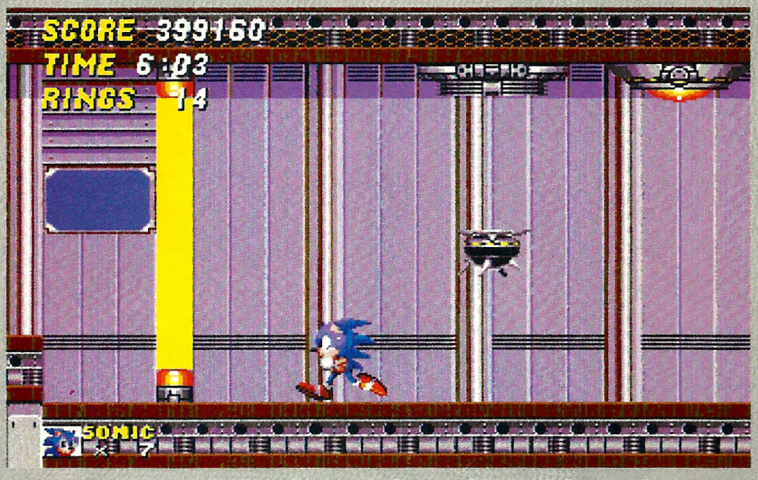
WING FORTRESS ZONE ONE ACT

There are several chances to enter the special stage in this zone, and there are also several chances to fall off this big flying ship. If you're in need of an extra life or two, here's a little tip for you.

On top of the ship in the left-hand corner is a lamppost. Don't go through it. Go to the left, and you'll see some escalators. Jump on these all the way to the top and you'll see an extra life. You can't, however, actually reach it. Jump up and knock it, and it will then fall down. Get it, go through the lamppost, and when you come out, the extra life will be back there again.

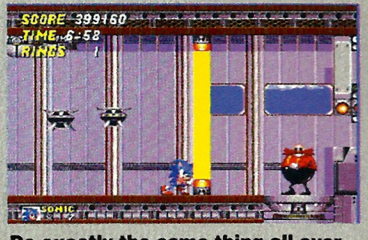
You need these lives, because this stage is difficult to get through. When you reach the end you'll be blocked off by two orange beams, with Robotnik only a few yards away, laughing his head off.

Three floating platforms appear with spikes on the bottom. Avoid these and when the laser at the top of the room opens up and shows an orange glow. Stand on the platforms and hit it. Follow the same pattern five or six times and then go get after Robotnik.

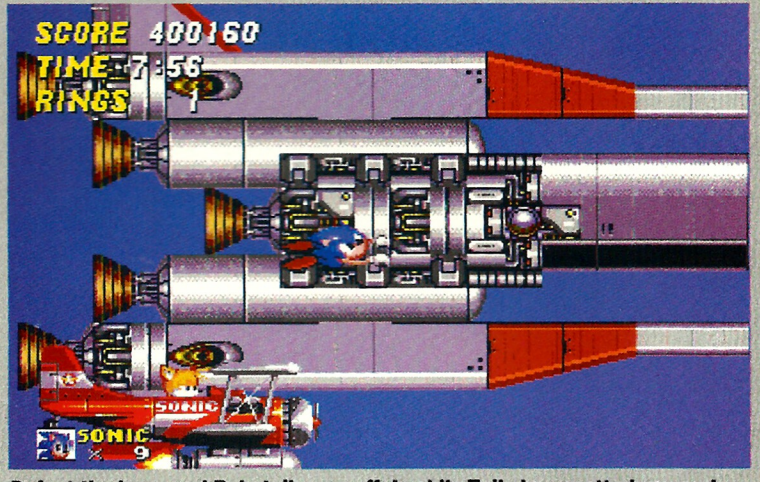


Run over to the corner to avoid the platforms with the spikes on the bottom, and jump on them when the laser opens up and turns orange. If it turns blue, run away, because it's about to fire at you

Follow the pattern of the platforms, and spin jump the laser at the right time, then run over to the other side



Do exactly the same thing all over again (and stop laughing Robotnik you smug git)



Defeat the laser and Robotnik runs off. Luckily Tails has spotted you and gives you a lift. If you're playing as Tails, Sonic pilots the plane. You'll automatically jump onto the tail of the plane and be towed towards Robotnik's secret lair

DEATH EGG ZONE ONE ACT

When you defeat the laser, Robotnik chickens out and flies away to his hidden space ship. Luckily, Tails spots him and flies up in his by-plane to help you out. You fly up and hang onto the ship for dear life. Then you're after Robotnik again.

Thing is, he's got some tough defences, including a replica Sonic. Yep, it's another Sonic, only this one's wearing some metal armour, and the only way to hit him is to bounce on his forehead, so be careful how you attack him.

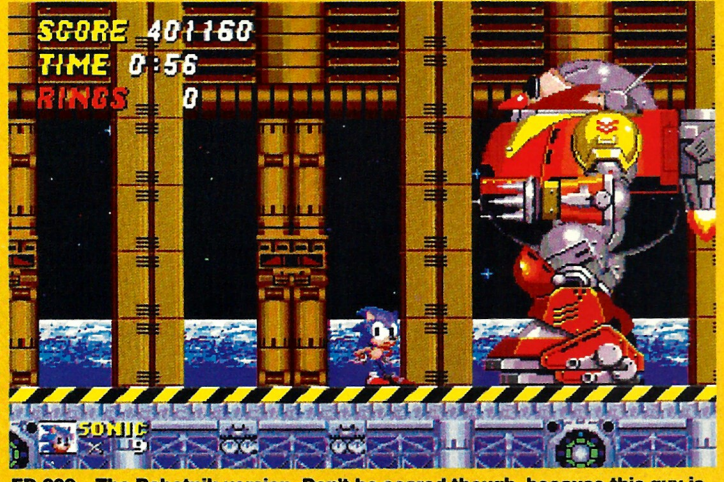
Learn the beast's pattern and it won't take too long for you to finish off. You run to the right, just in time to see Robotnik dive into his ED209 look-alike costume. As you'd expect, this boss is very big and very tough, but also incredibly slow.

Run to the left corner and wait. Robotnik walks towards you and then jumps in the air. When in the air, he'll target you. Now move slightly to the right to avoid Robotnik as he falls down. Now as he bends over, run, jump and hit him once on the bridge if his nose. Now run to the right corner and repeat. It takes time but persevere, because the complete, emeralds and all, end sequence is well worth seeing.

Robotnik's next line of defence really rubs it in. A metallic Sonic that can only be hit on the forehead. He spins left to right and you need to jump over him, then he jumps over you. Learn his pattern...

... and then run past him to try to reach Robotnik, whose got one more trick up his sleeve

He runs off on his spindly legs and slips into his final costume and what an outfit it is...



ED-209 – The Robotnik version. Don't be scared though, because this guy is as slow as he is ugly (and boy is he ugly). Still Sonic is fab and all that, and you don't want to give up now you've come this far, do you?

RIP 'N' TIP

THE SECRET STAGE!

When you think about, the secret bonus stage in the original *Sonic* wasn't exactly hard to find. All you had to do was collect 50 rings and then fly through the (very) big ring at the end of the level. Granted, you had only 12 chances to get 6 chaos emeralds, but the mazes weren't exactly difficult to get through.

But with *Sonic 2*, that's all changed. First of all, you now have to get seven, yes seven, chaos emeralds and secondly, entering the secret stage and finally getting your hands on a chaos emerald is trickier than ever before.

Collect 50 rings and then find your lamppost. When you walk past it, a ring of stars will appear above it. Jump through the ring to enter the secret stage. Simple enough, but pass a lamppost without 50 rings and it just acts as a restart point.

This gives you two problems. One, you spend all your time looking for rings and two, if you come across a restart point and you haven't got enough rings, you need to work your way around it. Die, and you'll have to start the level all over again.

Also, when you come out of the secret stage, all the rings you collected beforehand are back where they were. Do you go back and collect them, or carry on and try to reach the end of the level? Furthermore, you can play the special stage as many times on a level as there are lampposts.

This adds a whole new dimension to the gameplay. Do you go from start to finish on each level and only enter a special stage when you just happen to pass a lamppost with more than 50 rings, or do you play for every lamppost on every stage? There are three on the first act alone.

Of course, if you decide to go for every lamppost, you use up more time and reduce your chances of getting a continue, which you will need later on.

Each secret stage has a goal, that goal being to collect as many rings as you need. The stage is split into three parts and you need to collect a certain amount of rings to get through the next part. Reach the end with enough rings and Sonic will run on to collect the emerald.

If you haven't got enough rings, Sonic will stop just short, tempting you to get it right the next time. Each secret stage, although initially tough, follows the same pattern every time, so it's really just a case of practicing and remembering where the rings are and where and when to jump to avoid the bombs.

Well done Sonic, that's one chaos emerald in the bag and only six more to go. You are good at this sort of thing, aren't you?

And they're off, 10-1 he doesn't make it. I'll have a fiver on that, matey

Er, you see those bombs, you'd better avoid them or you'll lose

Yo, way cool Sonic, you got 124 rings, but I've a feeling that this next section is going to be a bit harder. Still, if anyone can do it, Sonic can?

As in the game, Sonic can avoid getting hurt by spinning. But it also stops him from collecting any rings

SUPER SONIC!

Just when you thought Sonic was as powerful or as fast as he could get, along comes Super Sonic.

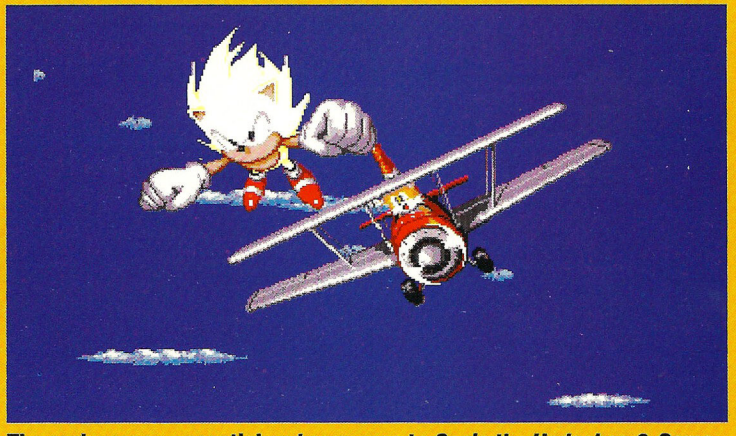
Becoming Super Sonic, however, is going to take some time. You need to collect all seven chaos emeralds. Then get 50 rings and then watch Sonic leap into the air, roar and turn yellow.

While yellow, Sonic is invincible to enemy attack and he is permanently speeded-up.

Sonic only remains Super for as long as you have rings. Yes, as soon as you turn yellow, your ring counter goes down. When it reaches zero, you're back to the normal Sonic.

Get 50 rings and watch in awe

Sonic's invincible and very fast



The real, proper, essential end sequence to *Sonic the Hedgehog 2*. Come on then Sega when do we get *Sonic 3: The Return*?

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MEGA MEDIC

The MEGA MEDIC has been inundated with problems. No, he hasn't crashed his car or been chucked by his missus. Mr Mellerick has, quite simply, received lots more questions from frustrated game playing folk

STUCK AT THE TRUCK

Q Can you help me get past the big truck at the end of level six on *Predator 2*? By the time I get round to it I've got only my small gun and I keep getting hit all the time, meaning I die a lot.
Timothy Jennings, Bristol

A You could check out all the passwords for this game in MEGA PLAY, but seeing as you've already got to level six, they're a bit useless. Never mind though, because I can still help you out.

The best tactic is to take out the driver first and then lay into the rest of the truck. With the driver out of the way, things are a lot easier. What I can't figure out is why you haven't got any serious weapons. When you pick up a weapon, save it, because although your normal gun is OK for normal guys, your other weapons are essential for attacks on helicopters and taxis.

DISNEY DISTRESS

Q How do you kill the man with the knife in *Castle of Illusion starring Mickey Mouse*? He is always stabbing me, and when I attempt to jump on his head, he just puts his hand up to protect himself.

Also, in *Quackshot starring Donald Duck*, what's the best way to kill the knight at the very end?
Michael Sharpe, Peterborough

A Er, excuse me, but I don't think I've come across a man with a knife. I guess you must mean the fat bloke who attacks you with what looks like a tea-towel. If you do mean him, then follow these moves and he shouldn't be too much of a problem.

When he appears on screen, let him jump towards you. Just before he tries to whip you, he'll smile. Jump immediately onto his head and land back on the floor right next to him. Repeat this three or four times and he'll jump away to a new position. Keep hassling him in the same way and it won't take long for him to explode, and give you a nice juicy diamond.

Now let's turn to *Quackshot*. The knight you're talking about is guarding the treasure, and he's not going to give it up easily. Stand on the left side of the room and wait. When he throws his sword, jump over it and stick one of your plungers on the wall. Stand on your plunger as the rocks fall down, and then fire a plunger at the knight.

Jump over the knight to the right-hand side of the screen and fire at him. If you're lucky, you'll hit him again. Repeat this, jumping from the left to the right and vice versa. Do this about six or seven times, and you'll get your hands on the treasure.

WHAT'S THIS WORLD CUP BUSINESS THEN?

Q Recently, while looking after my nine-year old nephew, Andrew, I had the opportunity to browse through the first issue of MEGA, the new Mega Drive magazine.

Although I do not own a Mega Drive, my nephew does, and while I was looking after him the other day he had his Mega Drive on and was playing *World Cup Italia '90*. When I mentioned to him your remarks about this game from the magazine, he disagreed with them. He's had *WC Italia '90* for nearly five weeks and finds it difficult to qualify for the final tournament. And even when he does qualify, he usually gets beaten in his first game. If you have some tips that would help him, it would be appreciated.
Richard Pearce, Tulloch, Perth

A First things first, we did say that *WC Italia '90* is a pile of rubbish, but because it's so damn annoying to play, it does actually tend to be a bit difficult. The only thing which really gets you anywhere is goal scoring. Learn how your opponent's goalie acts and then shoot or try a header from the edge of the 18-yard box into one of the corners. Practice this, and you should score almost every time.

If you're having trouble getting possession, however, gang up on the person who has the ball, and slide tackle him several times. Then just boot the ball up field and prepare to head it on to a member of your team. Keep practicing this manoeuvre and your team could become World Champions.

HOW TO BE A BETTER RASHER

Q Is there a password which will help me complete *Road Rash*? If there is, what is it? This game has been driving me crazy.

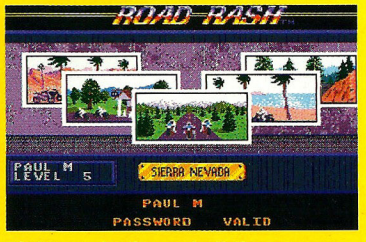
PS. I have two jerky friends who started making fun of me when I told them that I was going to write to you, because they think you won't even read it. So please, please prove them wrong.

PPS. Your mag is truly the best Mega Drive mag I have ever read.
Ashraf Mahdi, West Acton, London

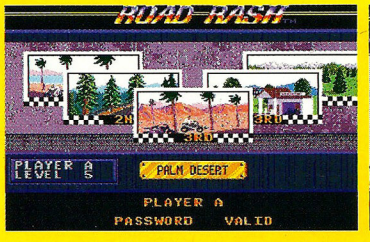
A First things first. Tell your two mates that I read every letter that comes in and I help out as many people as possible. Secondly, we think the mag is pretty hot stuff too. Now let's get on with *Road Rash*, shall we? Right, here's a little cheat code which will give you over $31,000,000 with the Diablo bike and allow you to start on level five: 00000 01MK5 URO74 57GSC. But, if you fancy finishing the whole thing, enter 11233 0IV84 UREI5 5DCUI.

Now enter any race you like and trash your bike. Then sit back and watch the end sequence as Natasha takes you away on her bike and Helldog gets a bit narked.

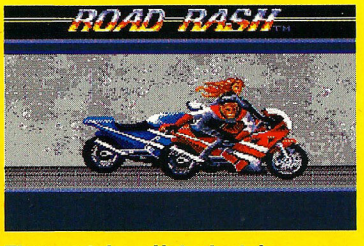
Enter your password here and get ready to do some serious Rashing. This is level five you know



Right, you're in, and all the courses are waiting for you. Make your choice carefully



If you enter the other password, you'll find yourself already qualified. Enter any race and trash you bike

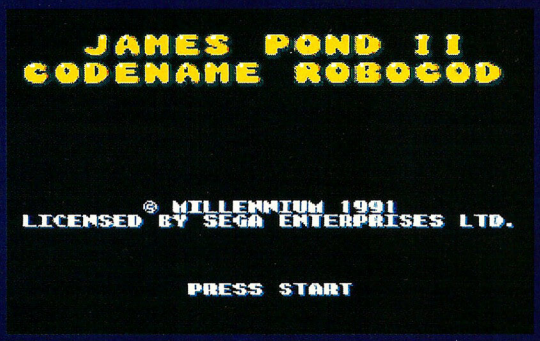


Then watch as Natasha takes you away on her bike. I wonder what she's got in mind?

FISHING AROUND FOR THE LEVEL SELECT

Q Please can you truthfully tell me the level select cheat for *James Pond 2: Robocod*? If you can answer this question for me, I'll be your devoted fan.
Sean Williams, Cambridge

A Here we go Sean. On the title screen press and hold the Down-Left diagonal and buttons A and C. Now press Start, still holding the buttons and the D-pad down. You should now come to the level select screen. Easy.



Make sure you do the cheat on the title screen otherwise it won't work, and we don't want that, do we?

Then, when it's worked, you can select your level, test the sound and change the controls

ROBBED OF ROBOTNIK

Q Is there an easy way of killing Dr Robotnik in the Labyrinth Zone of *Sonic the Hedgehog*? I seem to get killed every time.
Usmat Sheikh, London

A Well, the only way to get through Act 3 of the Labyrinth Zone is to ignore Dr Robotnik completely. Yep, just hit him once and he'll fly off, then you have to concentrate on getting up through the level before you drown. It's not impossible, but it is tough. Time your jumps and remember Sonic moves differently underwater.

SEARCHING FOR SECRET ROOMS

Q I've heard that there are some secret rooms in *Alien 3*. I've looked all over the place for them, but to no avail. Do you know where to find them, and if so, can you tell me?
L Thorpe, Telford

A Well, there are sixteen levels and they're all very big, but there is one secret room that I do know of. It's on level two and it's dead easy to find. From the start of the level, fire straight away at the oncoming alien and then jump up and left through a gap in the wall. There are loads more secret rooms, but you'll just have to look for them.

NOT SO MIGHTY

Q Can you help me out with *Might and Magic* from Electronic Arts. I've had the game for quite some time now, but my set of characters can never get anywhere. Are there any cheats or tactics that will at least help me to get into the game?
Michael Johns, North London

A The solution to all your problems is to build up your characters. Build them up by taking part in fights which you know you can win.

When you start the game you'll find yourself at the Inn in Middlegate. Turn left and step west, then turn left again so you're facing a wall. Take a step south and you will walk through the wall. Turn left again and take two steps to face your first battle. Beat these guys and search the area to find a chest. Now head back to the Inn and rest your party, saving the game. Repeat this over and over again to really build up those levels. Also visit the Training Area at 10,7 to gain some more precious levels.

Once you've done all this, searching around and getting somewhere becomes much less hassle.

GOING ROUND IN CIRCLES

Q Can you tell me how to get out of level four in *The Immortal*? I've tried and tried, but I can't figure it out. What's the circle on the floor for, and why did the woman in the previous room give me a ring?
J Ellery, Worcester

A Patience my boy, all will be revealed. It's quite simple really. Put a ring on each of the holes, then take a walk around the circle in a clockwise direction. After a few times the exit should appear. Just walk through and you're onto level five. Good luck.
(For a more comprehensive guide to completing *The Immortal*, turn to page 78.)

CATCH IT, MAN

Q Can you give me any clues as to who the best teams are in *Joe Montana II: Sports Talk Football*? I usually play New York and they're OK, but what teams would you recommend, and have you any tips on catching a long pass?
Paul Davidson, Wembley

A As you say, New York are a fairly good team, but by far the best are San Francisco, though Buffalo are also very good. If you're having trouble catching, make sure your receiver is running fast enough and then press button C to make a spectacular dive.

FIGHTING THE AGG TWINS

Q Could you please help me with *Wonderboy in Monsterworld*? I can't get past Gragg and Glagg. I've tried everything and I am now very desperate indeed.
Steve Jones, Portsmouth

A Stand on the platform in the middle of the screen and jump over the rocks that Gragg and Glagg fire at you. Jump down and hit them when they've swallowed the boulders. When the boulders appear again, run back to the centre of the screen and use the springy platforms to get back to the platform. Repeat this over and over until you beat them. It's as easy as that really Steve.

THE ROAD TO POWER

Q I enjoyed reading the first edition of MEGA so much that I have decided to take you up on your special subscription offer. Yes, I've sent off the form, well a photocopy. Hmm, that was a long opening sentence. Have I flattered you enough to be considered for the MEGA STAR prize?

Anyway, as I was saying, I enjoyed the mag. It's exactly what the market has been screaming out for – a mag just for Mega Drive users. What a brilliant idea!

Right, now the real reason for writing to you. I am stuck on *Rings of Power*. I have found ten of the eleven rings, but the ring of mutation still eludes me, even though I've travelled round the world more times than the moon has! According to the game book, I am supposed to be looking for a woman (just shows how lifelike the game is), but I can't find her anywhere.

Please can you help me?
Chris Gowland, Huntington, York

A Well, Chris, thanks for all the compliments, but if you want to be a MEGA STAR you'll have to write in to MEGA MOUTH (see page 102). Anyway, down to the problem in hand, *Rings of Power*.

I can't say I've played the game as much as you obviously have, but (using my amazing powers) I've found the location of the last ring. If you search 24,1 longitude and 14,3 latitude you should find what you're looking for. Good luck, matey.

PHANTASY STAR MIST

Q I am having great problems defeating Nei First on *Phantasy Star II*. I have heard that Shir the

NO KIDDING

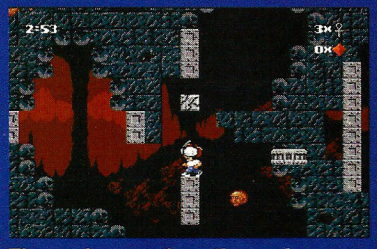
Q Excuse me Mr Medic, but I was wondering if you could help me out on *Kid Chameleon*? I've had the game for a few months now and, as you probably know, it's very big. Well I've seen a tip printed that lets me warp all the way through to the end of the game. It works, but I don't know how to beat the last boss, called Plethora. I've found some hidden blocks but they only contain clocks and I don't know exactly how to kill him. Can you please help?
Martin Fraser, Leicester

A Yeah, it's a very good tip (in fact it's so good it's printed in this month's MEGA PLAY on page 67), but you're going to have to spend plenty of time trying to beat him. It's not impossible, but you've got to find the hidden helmets on the level and then you have to know how to tackle him.

There are two helmets, a cyclone helmet and the Fly helmet, and they're both useful. Collect the cyclone helmet first, it's hidden on the left-hand column of the two in the middle. Now fly up and along the top of the room and bounce up and down on his head. As you do this you will see his eyes getting bigger, and once each eye has "popped", he'll be well and truly dead.

If you can do this without getting hit, all the better. But if you do get hit, head for the fly helmet, which you'll find directly opposite from where you got the cyclone helmet (see screenshot). Now finish him off and then enjoy the fun as his eyes fly out of his head and Kid Chameleon cracks another game. The end sequence is well worth watching too.

Find the cyclone helmet first, and then find Plethora



Then, when you lose the cyclone helmet, take the fly one

He's quite easy to kill, just keep bouncing on his head. The hard part is actually getting up there

TIPS

Thief could steal some "Star Mist" to bring Nei back to life, but I can't seem to get her to do it. Any tips would be appreciated.
Peter Hogan, Shepperton

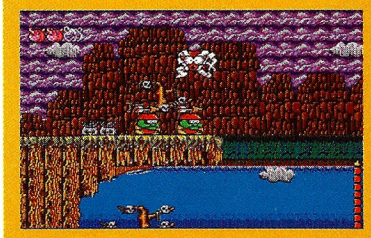
A She has about 1400 hit points, so she's going to take some working on to kill. Make sure you've got plenty of Trimate and then set yourselves up as follows. You have the Laser Knife (using both hands), Nei has the Laser Bar (again both hands), Hunter has the Laser Cannon and Guardian has the Laser Slasher (both hands). It does take some time, but keep at it.

PLUNGING TO DEATH

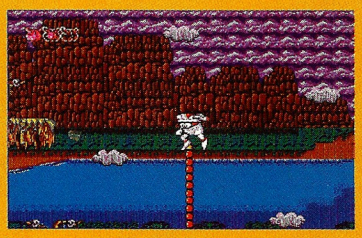
Q I need help to do two things on *Quackshot*. Firstly, where do I find the green plungers that enable me to fly over things and secondly, how the hell do I defeat the person that throws an axe at me and splits up, on the Viking ship. Thanks for an ace mag, and I look forward to receiving your advice.
W Capping, Stowmarket, Suffolk

A The person you are talking about is the Viking Ghost, and if you beat him, all will be revealed. To defeat him you need to fire a plunger at his head a split-second before he throws his axe. To do this, you need to do a small jump and then fire. He then falls to pieces, puts himself back together again and then jumps over to the other side of the room. Just turn around and fire again. Keep doing this, and when he's defeated, walk through the door. The old Viking will be there and he'll tell you that he doesn't have the Viking diary, but he gives you the green plunger, which you need to use in the South Pole.

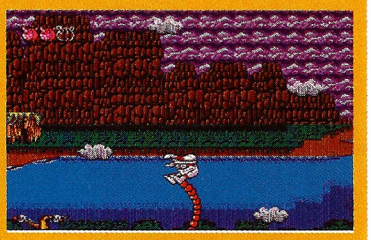
MAGICAL ATTACK OR DECAP TURBO?



Oh dear, it looks like Chuck's been hit. Better try to find a pole



Ah yes, there's one. Now if I can just time it right..



Bingo! One extra unit of energy thank you very much

Q Congratulations on producing this brilliant 100% Mega Drive-based magazine. Could you please give me a level-select cheat for Magical Hat Turbo Adventure, as I am getting bored of starting from the beginning each time I play?
Jimbob, Yorkshire

A Well, we're glad you enjoy the mag Jimbob, but unfortunately there isn't (as far as I know) a level select for *Magical Hat Turbo Adventure* or the official version renamed *Decap Attack*. If you're in need of a tip, however,you might like to know how to gain some extra energy.

When you come across a bouncy pole, bounce on the top of it and it bends. One of the segments of the pole then turns white and gives you back one unit of energy. This tip definitely works on *Decap Attack*, but I don't know if it will work on *Magical Hat Turbo Adventure*. You'll just have to try it and see.

DOORS, DOORS, DOORS

Q How do I get through the last level in *Revenge of Shinobi*? It's the one with lots of spinning doors.
Ben Murray, Liverpool

A One wrong move on this level and you get completely lost. Follow these instructions, however, and you can meet up with the Neo Zeed himself. Go right from the start and you'll see a wall that doesn't reach the ceiling. Jump and somersault over the wall and you'll land right next to a door. Jump over that door and go in to the next one on the right. You should be in a room which has four pillars coming down from the ceiling, and there should be boxes either side of you. Go left and into the first door. Go left again and you'll find two doors, one on top of the other. Take the bottom one and you'll be in the exit screen. Walk over to the exit sign, but don't go in. Turn around and jump. Somersault, then fire your eight shurikens at the wall. A special power-up will appear making the Neo-Zeed easier to beat. I hope that's helpful.

OCTO SPLATTER

Q Can you tell me how to defeat the octopus that's chasing me on level eight of *Splatterhouse II*. It throws spikes at me and I can avoid them, but how do I defeat the monster?
Peter Reed, Scunthope

A You're halfway there already actually. When the octopus throws his spikes, you need to hit them and they'll drop to the floor. Pick them up and lob them back at him when his eye is open. Do this until he swims away, never to be seen again. **M**

IMMORTAL SPECIAL

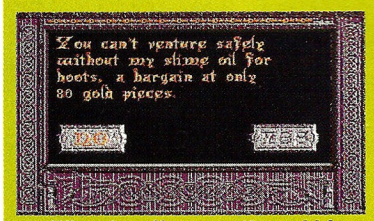
Well, I dunno, as soon as we ask for some questions we get flooded with problems about the same game. We've had five different people writing in with their very different problems on *The Immortal*, so we decided to out them all together in our special *Immortal* agony column.

Q I thing your mag is great and would like to congratulate all the team.
I'm sorry to bother you Mr Medic, but I've got a problem with *The Immortal*. I'm on level two, but I can't buy the oil from the trader who is sitting in the corner of the second room. I have only 70 gold pieces and if I try to buy it from him, he says it costs 80. Have I missed something on my travels (more money for instance) or is the trader just a decoy who I ignore him completely?
Daniel Munson, Worcester

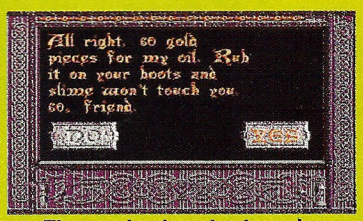
① Oi, you. Trader-type bloke, got any oil? You have? Great. Ah, but I've only got 60 gold pieces

A Let's get a few things sorted out first. No, this bloke's not a decoy, he's an honest tradesman. And like all tradesmen, he likes nothing better than a good bartering. Walk up to him, and say no to the 80 pieces of gold. Walk away a few paces and then walk back upto him.

He's now had a change of heart and is now selling the oil for 60 gold pieces. And you could definitely do with some oil, because when you use it, it stops the slime from crawling all over you in a later room.

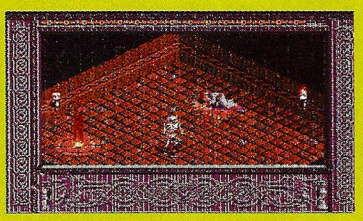


② When he offers you the gold for 80 gold pieces, turn him down and walk away



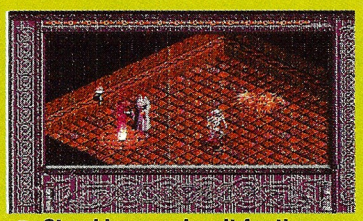
③ Then go back and ask again. This guy is desperate for a sale and let's you have it for 60 pieces

Q Can you help me? I can get all the way to the end of level two on *The Immortal*, but I don't know how to get out. I've defeated the trolls and all that, but when I walk into the beam of light that comes up from the floor, I die. I've tried it after drinking the Magic Muscle potion and without drinking it, but it's all to no avail. Help me out, because it's driving me completely round the bend.
Thanking you in advance
Colin Atkins, Northampton

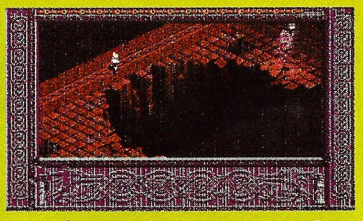


① This is no time for a kip, get up and get on with your mission you lazy good for noting

A Well, I hate to point out the blatantly obvious, but you need to use the gem that you've only just picked up (things happen for a reason you know). Have a kip before you do anything to restore any lost energy, then get up. Walk towards the light. and stand just in front of it . When it turns purple, walk straight into it and press button C (to call up your inventory) quickly. Now select the gem you're holding, drop it and you'll be magically transported through to the end. Walk down the ladder to receive your certificate and then get on with the next level.



② Stand here and wait for the beam to change colour. Now walk into it, drop the gem and...



③ ... hey presto, you are now at the end of level three. Walk down the steps to level four

THE REALITY ABOUT *PHANTASY STAR III*

Q The wife has been on at me to buy an RPG cartridge (women eh? – Ed). So, we had a look at a few, and read the reviews in your Top 100 and decided on *Phantasy Star III*. We settled down on a Sunday afternoon to see how we would fair. We travelled around the world with Rhys, went into villages, asked lots of questions and spoke to all the people. And that's it, we're now stuck.

Our questions are: How do you get into the caves? Where is the sapphire? How do you get on the boat and then onto the island? Where is the cyborg? I've tried and tried to work out the answers to these questions until it's driven me to write to you. Perhaps it's because I'm 29 years old and my brain cells are dying. Am I too old for this Mega Drive lark? Please help.
P Smith, Gloucester

A You get into a cave by walking into it, but some caves let you in only if you're carrying a certain something. To get on the boat, you need to find Mieu (the cyborg), who is in the forest east of Landen. When you find her, go back to Yaata and see the old man by the fountain. He'll deliver you to the south island, where you must find Lyle, who'll then give you the sapphire. Good luck.

Excuse me luv, I'm looking for a cyborg. Don't suppose you've seen one around here, have you?

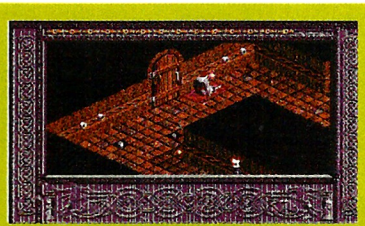
Ah, there you are. Look, I need to get on this boat and I need a cyborg to do it. Will you help? Thanks

OK then old man, here's one cyborg. Now will you let me have a go in your boat?

Ah, the fresh sea air and all these bloody seagulls. Watch out... SPLAT!.. oh dear, too late

Come on then Mieu, let's see if we can find Lyle and borrow that Sapphire from him

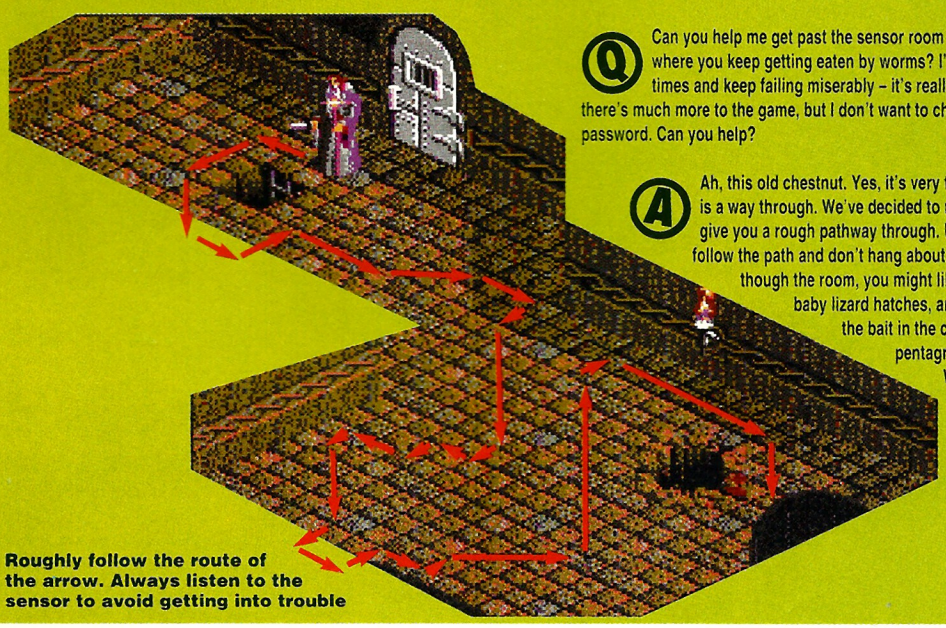
OK then Lyle me old mucker, you've got it and I need it. You gonna hand it over, or what?



Q I've got through to level four of *The Immortal*, but when I activate the Magic Carpet, I fly off and can't control myself, so I end up getting burned. Please help.
Greg Graham, Slough

A Just fly the carpet to the end of each room and then, when it's safe, go back to the menu and deactivate it. Just don't try to slow down or go exploring, because it will end in certain death and a burnt bum.

Once you've finished flying around get off at this door and walk in



Roughly follow the route of the arrow. Always listen to the sensor to avoid getting into trouble

Q Can you help me get past the sensor room on level five, the one where you keep getting eaten by worms? I've tried it hundreds of times and keep failing miserably – it's really annoying. I know there's much more to the game, but I don't want to cheat by using a password. Can you help?

A Ah, this old chestnut. Yes, it's very frustrating, but there is a way through. We've decided to map the room and give you a rough pathway through. Use your sensor, follow the path and don't hang about. Also, when you get though the room, you might like to know this. The baby lizard hatches, and you need to drop the bait in the centre of the pentagram, then find the exit. Watch out for the slime though, because if you die, you'll have to do the sensor room again.

SPOOKY

Q I'm stuck at the end-of-level guardian on level four of *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts*. Can you please help me, because it's driving me crazy?
B Palmer, Harwich

A Yeah it is a bit tough, but once you know what to do, it's quite easy. Ideally, you should have the Firewater and aim for the pulsating larva outgrowths in the middle of the queen. Stay on the left side of the queen and shoot the circles in the middle when they appear. Move over to the right and repeat. Now go to the centre and shoot down. Overall it takes about 40 shots to kill her. Good luck – you'll need it.

Find the right position and use the firewater to take out the blobs of lava

There you go, three down and only two to go. Watch out for those lava bugs though

There, that's that done, get your 5000 points and move on

KEEP SENDING IN YOUR QUESTIONS!

If you have a problem (preferably to do with Mega Drive games), and you'd like to read a solution in a future edition of MEGA, then send it to the MEGA MEDIC, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon, BA1 2BW.

Many sackfuls of MEGA MEDIC mail indeed make Mellerick a happy man. Little things and all that...

ARENA

Hello and welcome once again to ARENA, the page which shows you how to have even more fun with your Mega Drive, indeed the page which makes you gasp and say, "Well, I didn't know that, but I do now"

WACKY CHALLENGES

And here we are again, in the wacky challenges corner. We've got some real crackers for you this month, so if you think you're good enough, have a go, and if you can't do them, then it doesn't really matter. Oh, and by the way, if anyone can do the *Side Pocket* challenge, send in your tips to MEGA PLAY, they'll be very useful.

1 DYNAMITE DUKE

First up this month is *Dynamite Duke*, a coin-op conversion from a very old arcade game. ***Mark Jameson*** from Whitby wants to see if there's anyone out there who can complete the game without using the machine gun. He's done it, so it's not impossible.

2 EA HOCKEY

I know we've used this game before in issue one, but ***David*** (who forget to include his address) sent this challenge in. Try to win the championship as Great Britain without conceding more than two goals during the whole tournament. I mean, winning as Great Britain is hard enough as it is, but winning without conceding more than two goals is really going some, don't you think?

3 ALIEN 3

The entire MEGA team have had a go at this one, but there's only one of us who can't do it, no prizes for guessing who. Anyway, why don't you lot have a go? Try to complete each of the first three levels in under two minutes, it's not impossible but you will need a lot of practice to get it right. You don't get any special bonuses or anything, just the personal satisfaction of knowing that you can play *Alien 3* better than Neil West... oops, looks like I've just let the cat out of the bag there, doesn't it?

SEGA SECRETS

Once again we've scoured our games cupboard to bring you some silly things that programmers put in their games. See if you can spot them.

1 SUPER LEAGUE BASEBALL

Not a great baseball sim and it looks a bit dated now. Still, load up *Super League Baseball* and take a look at the carpark. In the right-hand corner you should be able to see Virgil Tracy's Thunderbird 2. See, even International Rescue need a break sometimes, and there's nothing more relaxing than a day of baseball, is there?

Strike one. Or is it? Answers on a postcard to the usual address

2 SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

Did you know that there is an extra, extra special bonus room hidden in *Sonic the Hedgehog*?

Well, if you press Up, C, Down, C, Left, C, and Right, you'll hear a chime. Now press and hold down button A and then press Start. You should now have activated the de-bug cheat. Finish the first level and enter the secret stage. As soon as you appear, press B and change Sonic into a ring. Now move out of the maze and float downwards. You should see a special room full of chaos emeralds, warps and loads of other things. Trouble is you can't pick anything up. Useless, huh?

Amazing bonus room this. What a pity you can't pick anything up

4 PREDATOR 2

People are always complaining that some games are too easy to finish, so we thought we'd see how quickly we could finish some of the worst offenders.

Take *Predator 2* for instance, easy game, no problem huh? Well, try to finish the whole game from start to finish in under 15 minutes and with a score of over 1,400,000 points. Again it's not impossible, but you will have to know your way around the alien ship level. One bit of advice – use your weapons properly and save up some for the end.

5 SIDE POCKET

Side Pocket is a really tricky little game, and no mistake. So we decided that we'd get you to do our work for us. Finish the Trick Game (yes, completely finish it) and then send in the complete solution to MEGA PLAY. This has two major advantages: firstly some of the trick shots are the same as the challenge shots that you get later on in the one-player game, and secondly you could get a chance to win a Game Gear. What are you waiting for? Get to it!

WEIRD AND WONDERFUL HAPPENINGS

Found any little secret things in your favourite game? Well, just to amuse you (and hopefully to inspire you to send in some of your own funny findings) MEGA shows you two extra little things that don't do anything to the game but should bring a little smile to your face. First up is a silly *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts* trick, that turns the official version into a Japanese game, and secondly there is a *John Madden Football* tip. It works on some versions and not on others, so if it doesn't work, never mind.

Don't forget to tell us about anything strange you find in your favourite game, and if you're lucky, you could win something rather special.

1 GHOULS 'N' GHOSTS

Enter the options mode from the title screen and move down to the music test. Select number 26, and then select number 56 on the sound test. Hold down the Down-Left diagonal, buttons A, B and C, then press Start. Now stand back and play in Japanese mode. What more could you wish for?

2 JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL '92

This is a strange happening, which sometimes works and sometimes doesn't.

Kick off, and send the ball out of bounds. Then pause the game and select the instant replay. Move down on the joypad and you should see giant American footballers waiting at the bottom of the screen.

SEND IN YOUR FINDINGS

This month's mystery ARENA prize goes to *Mark Johnson* of Whitby for his *Dynamite Duke* challenge. MEGA would also like to thank *David* (who forgot to put down hid surname and his address) for sending in the *EA Hockey* challenge

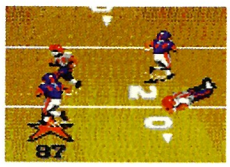
And you, yes you, could be next month's winner of a mystery prize, and you could also get your name in print. So, if either of these prospects tickle your fancy, reveal your secrets or even send in a challenge to: ARENA, MEGA, Future Publishing, Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon, BA1 2BW. You never know, next month you could be better off.

TOP 100

Our Top 100's had a bit of surgery since last month. It has been nipped and tucked into a sturdier beast, and it now has a few interesting little extras attached. Firstly, there are more readers' ads, so you can pick up all those hard to come by games. Also, this month we've included some past masters. These are mini reviews of classic games, which are still worth a look. Oh, and if you want to place a free ad in the next issue of MEGA, fill in the form on page 91 and send it in pronto...

1. JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL '92

Publisher: EASN
Price: £39.95



In both two-player and single-player modes, *John Madden Football '92* is the most exciting, blood-churning, charming, absorbing, frustrating and adrenaline-pumping game we've ever played.

You want graphics? Madden's got them – in full parallax, multi-frame animation. You need sound? Check out the Rob Hubbard soundtrack and digitised samples throughout the game. And this game's beauty isn't just skin-deep. With over one thousand play combinations, there has never been a game which offers so much depth.

This '92 version slicked up the graphics (although a lot of players actually preferred the original, more blocky, approach) as well as tarted up the game's front end and options. So, while you'd have to be a real fan to buy both versions, you'd have to be completely and utterly out of your tree to own a Mega Drive and not get this astonishingly enduring game.

MEGA says: The best American Football game ever? Yep. The best sports game of any kind ever? Definitely. The best Mega Drive game of all-time full stop? You bet. And we'll take on anyone who says otherwise...

TO SWAP: *John Madden '92*
0962 715030
698 886295

FOR SALE: *John Madden '92*
£25 – 081 657 2108
£25 – 0784 242654
£17 – 021 748 3498
£20 – 0865 864296
£20 – 091 274 2769

2. SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 2

Publisher: Sega
Price: £39.99
Reviewed in Issue 2 of MEGA

Hey, you want top grade video game entertainment? Then you got it. Fast, smooth colourful graphics, top sound and playability that would make most game programmers eyes water. Even if you do finish it, you've still got the two-player races and all those time challenges. What is the fastest time possible for the Emerald Hill Zone act 1?

MEGA says: Again, you might find it too easy to finish, but it does leave the original sobbing in a dark damp corner.

3. NHLPA HOCKEY (INC. EA HOCKEY)

Publisher: EASN
Price: £39.99
Reviewed in Issue 1 of MEGA

Just as *John Madden '92* remained firmly fixed to its predecessor's roots, so does this. The new version is just as much a classic as the original, but there aren't enough new features to earn the game promotion to the number one spot.

The top-down scrolling viewpoint still works beautifully, and the gameplay is as perfect as you could ever hope for it to be. Mind you, just like in the real thing, the best bit is when the gloves come off and the punch-ups start. Not as involved as *John Madden Football*, and the naïve or short-sighted player will tell you that scoring's more down to luck than skill, but for nerve-tingling tension that's absolutely second-to-none you still won't find a pulse-raiser much better (or tougher to master) than this.

MEGA says: Even better than the original (MEGA rated it 92% – it would have got more if it hadn't been a sequel). *NHLPA Hockey* is bigger, better and bloodier than its older brother, and it truly kicks. A fantastic game that no Mega Drive owner should be without.

FOR SALE: *NHLPA Hockey*
£25 – 081 657 2108

FOR SALE: *EA Hockey*
£20 – 091 274 2769
Sell £20/Swap – 081 572 9439
£20 – 0742 683896

4. HELLFIRE

Publisher: Sega
Price: £34.99

Hellfire, the only serious competition to *Aero Blasters* in the space-blast department, is number one in a different field. If the Mega Drive's ever seen a more accurate coin-op conversion than this, we'd like to know what it is. A clever and imaginative shoot-'em-up, *Hellfire* makes you think before you zap with four switchable weapon systems which, if you're going to make any progress through the game, have to be employed with expert speed and accuracy. The end-of-level bosses have had a bit more thought put into their design than the usual "find the weak spot and sit and pummel it for a couple of minutes" routine, and the graphics change enough from level to level to make it a real joy to discover what's in store in each new stage. You get a lot of continues, which makes it a bit easy to complete, but hey – nothing's perfect.

MEGA says: Great stuff, although it pales a bit in the frenetic action department when you put it alongside *Aero Blasters*. If you find that one a bit too demanding, though, this'll be right up your street. *Hellfire* really is a superb game.

TO SWAP: *Hellfire*
Swap plus £3 – 0522 510967

FOR SALE: *Hellfire*
Sell £5/Swap – 0623 64688
£20 – 0823 282844

5. SUPER MONACO GP 2 (INC. SUPER MONACO GP)

Publisher: Sega
Price: £44.99

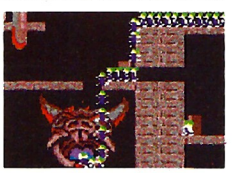
Right, we've had the sports game, the platform game and the shoot-'em-up. What's missing? Of course, the driving game! *Super Monaco GP* (Incidentally, does anyone else remember Sega's original Monaco GP arcade game? Nope, thought not.) was the most popular driving coin-op before *Out Run*, and the staggering graphics were thought by many to be completely impossible to simulate on a Mega Drive. And, indeed, they were, but disappointment turned to joy within seconds of loading this cart into the slot – the graphics may only be alright, but the gameplay is astonishing. Superb, definable control, high-speed adrenaline-pumping driving, *and* a bit of strategic depth to keep things interesting after the first few days.

The sequel improves significantly on the earlier game (without really changing it very much) especially in the area of car handling (thanks to input from Ayrton Senna), but with something that started off as fab as *Super Monaco GP*, that's still just window-dressing. Essential stuff.

MEGA says: The competition isn't really up to much as far as Formula One racing goes (yet), but even so, you'd have to go a long, long way to come up with a better driving game than this one. (And you'll probably have to wait a long, long time for someone to write one, anyway).

6. LEMMINGS

Publisher: Sega
Price: £39.99
Reviewed in Issue 2 of MEGA



180 one-player levels, 20 two-player levels and addictive puzzling gameplay that's going to keep you stumped for an incredibly long time. Excellent use of a password system and a stunningly easy control system make this a must for all gamers.

MEGA says: It's addictive, brain teasing and we can't get Neil away from it. What more of a recommendation do you need?

7. STREETS OF RAGE

Publisher: Sega
Price: £34.99

If every third Mega Drive game that gets released is a beat-'em-up, how come hardly any of them are any good? Thankfully, that's a question that *Streets Of Rage* doesn't have to answer, because it's great stuff – if it were only tougher to beat!

Lovely backdrops, loads of athletic fighting moves, excellent two-player action (two players can interact with each other to pull off some frightening moves) and an imaginative approach to special weapons (the police car firing rockets from half-a-dozen screens back and still managing to pick off the bad guys with pinpoint accuracy is brilliant!) all go together to make this the most challenging and rewarding game the Mega Drive has to offer in the genre.

MEGA says: If you want a beat-'em-up, there is no alternative (well, except *Golden Axe 2*).

TO SWAP: *Streets Of Rage*
Swap – 0685 389426

FOR SALE: *Streets Of Rage*
£15 – 021 748 3498
£28 – 0234 857002

8. QUACKSHOT

Publisher: Sega
Price: £39.99

Yes, it's another platformer; yes, it's another Disney licence; yes, it's a bit of a clone of *Mickey Mouse's Castle Of Illusion*; but none of that matters one little bit. Why not? Because *Quackshot* (even labouring under the burden of starring Donald "can't even speak properly" Duck) is excellent fun. This is the game that *Fantasia should* have been. It looks lush, it sounds lovely, and it's action-quacked (I'm really sorry about that) from start to finish.

MEGA says: Are you deaf? We said get it!

FOR SALE: *Quackshot*
£25 – 0442 69378
£28 – 051 928 1820
£20 – 0865 864296

9. SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

Publisher: Sega
Price: £34.99

It's quite possible that this is the most famous video game ever – it's certainly the one which, more than any other, lifted console games out of the spotty schoolboy ghetto and into the real-world limelight where they truly belong.

Yeah, it's a bit easy to finish but why be selfish? Isn't it nice that everyone gets a chance to see the end sequence for once? Anyway, there's so much hidden away in *Sonic The Hedgehog* and it's just so much damn fun to play that you'll never get bored with it, no matter how many times you whip nasty ol' Dr Robotnik's ass. And, if you don't still get a buzz when Sonic loops the loop at maximum speed with his super-fast boots on, get someone to check your pulse immediately – you may be dead.

MEGA says: Still the most technically stunning game the Mega Drive's ever seen, and the standard-bearer of a whole new era of video games. Completely amazing, completely brilliant.

TO SWAP:
Sonic The Hedgehog:
0227 451548
0272 737107
0685 389426
0962 715030

FOR SALE:
Sonic The Hedgehog
£25 – 0458 831614
£28 – 0234 857002
£20/Swap – 0559 363323
£20/Swap – 081 802 5665
£20 – 0455 202498
£15 – 021 748 3498
£12 – 0565 634827
£20 – 0865 864296

10. ROAD RASH

Publisher: EA
Price: £39.99

So you've played *Super Monaco 2* to death, huh? You're after more racing, but something with a bit more of an edge to it, right? You want *Road Rash*, mate. It might sound like a nasty disease that you get after spending too long in a sweaty boiler suit, but, in fact, *Road Rash* is a brilliant motorbike racing game with a difference – you don't just get to overtake your competitors, you get to smash their heads in as well!

Hurtle down five dangerous courses at suicidal speeds (avoiding traffic and speed cops as well as other racers), make your fortune only to spend it all on new and ever-faster bikes, and wear your knuckles down by riding alongside your enemies and punching them in the face. There are loads of bikes, loads of violence and five whole stages – this game really has got the lot.

MEGA says: Superbly atmospheric full-throttle romp that's arguably even more entertaining than *Super Monaco GP*, if a little less sophisticated. Whatever the arguments, though, there's no denying that *Road Rash* is a true classic. We advise you not to miss this one.

TO SWAP: *Road Rash*
Swap PLUS £4 – 0768 899773
0254 264427

FOR SALE: *Road Rash*
£20 – 0865 864296
Sell £28 – 0234 857002
£18 – 0772 685666

11. RAINBOW ISLANDS

Publisher: Taito (IMPORT)
Price: (see importer)

Already hailed as the best 16-bit computer game of all time, *Rainbow Islands* has come to the Mega Drive and, miraculously, has got even better. The impossibly addictive platform action is the same as ever, the amazingly cute graphics are as sweet as ever, and the devilish, fiendishly hidden bonuses are as devilish and fiendishly hidden as ever. And with Mega Drive's *Rainbow Islands* you get a whole extra game on top! Well, it's more of a variation than a completely different game, true, but the extra, harder version extends the life of a game which was already practically immortal, and makes it just about the best value-for-money investment you'll ever see in an arcade platformer. At once incredibly simple and deeply complex, *Rainbow Islands* is right up there at the peak of the platform programmer's art.

MEGA says: If you've got a UK Mega Drive, this game alone makes it worth buying a Jap adaptor. Seriously beautiful, incomparably playable and unbeatably addictive.

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Publisher: EA
Price: £39.99

There isn't a lot of competition in the golf field (shouldn't that be "course"? – Ed) when it comes to Mega Drive games, but what there is, *PGA Tour* is miles ahead of. The graphics are exquisite, the control is practically perfect, loads of people can play at once, it's

PGA TOUR GOLF
NUMBER 12

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What a shot! I mean, that's going at least, ooh, 20 yards...

There are two reasons why *PGA Tour Golf* is at the dizzy heights of number ten in our all time Top 100, and (wait for it) here they come.

Firstly, *PGA Tour Golf* is quite simply the best golf game available on the Mega Drive and golf (as it happens) is one of the rare sports that truly makes great video game entertainment. Anyone who can watch more than thirty minutes of televised golfing "action", however, should be checked out medically, to see if their blood is actually still flowing around their body. It's the playing that really counts.

And here we are for this year's Players Championship in Sawgrass

The second reason why *PGA Tour Golf* is so damn lovely is because it's got the best multi-player (ie more than two) gameplay going. Up to four people can play a round (ha, ha, snore) at any one time (against each other and the rest of the field) and there's nothing to touch it.

PGA Tour Golf was the follow up to EASN's first big sporting title, *John Madden Football*. To match the excitement and playability of that classic sports sim (the '93 version of which is reviewed on page 32 of this very issue of MEGA) was going to be hard, but EASN managed it.

The thing which makes *PGA Tour Golf* really work is its realism. This word gets thrown around all the time in connection with video games, but with 60 professional players, 4 accurately simulated PGA courses, variable wind, and rolling greens, any other word just wouldn't suffice.

The control system too is perfect. Press button B to set the power gauge, button B again to determine how powerful you want your shot to be and button B a third time to hit a perfect shot. If you fancy a bit of hook or slice, that can be added, and you can even add some extra oomph to make the shot go that little bit further. Be warned though, make a slight mistake, and your overswing could have disastrous results.

The graphics are er, green, and although there's not that much going on, the 3D viewpoint is used very well. Add to this sampled bird noises and other country sound effects, battery backed-up stats, players names and a save-game feature, and you've got a game that's so user-friendly it makes you a cup of tea while you're playing (well nearly). *PGA Tour Golf* is an absolute must for any golfing fans.

Looks like Fuzzy has gone into a big lead, you're going to have to go some to catch him

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Swap – 0685 389426

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got every option you could possibly want, and there's even a battery back-up. Nothing else so far captures that elusive "wandering around a beautiful landscape pausing occasionally to batter a harmless little ball around with a series of big sticks" atmosphere as well as *PGA* does. *World Class Leaderboard* comes close, but if golf is your bag (ho, ho), then this is your game.

MEGA says: This is the best golf game there is, and also the best Mega Drive game for more than two players. Why not club together (sorry) with your mates and buy it?

SEE PREVIOUS PAGE FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS CLASSIC GAME

TO SWAP: *PGA Tour Golf*
£18 – 0565 634827

13. SWORD OF VERMILLION

Publisher: Sega
Price: £49.99

Try not to be put off by the fearsome price tag on this one, because if you're into all that RPG hacking 'n' slashing malarkey, this'll be money well spent.

Sword Of Vermillion is probably the best game of the type on the Mega Drive and, in a market that's becoming more crowded by the day, that's no mean feat.This game is big, slick and sexy.

MEGA says: Look, you're as well to spend £50 on something excellent as waste £35 on something average, aren't you? Quality costs (and in this case it certainly does), but it's usually worth it.

FOR SALE:
Sword Of Vermillion
Sell £25/Swap – 081 301 2747

14. PHANTASY STAR 3

Publisher: SEGA
Price: £49.99

A completely huge RPG, with loads of different worlds and a whole gang of characters to control. Try to complete *this* one in a night without using the battery back-up...

MEGA says: It's a lot of money but in terms of hours of fun per pound, you'll be hard pushed to beat this one.

FOR SALE: *Phantasy Star III*
£25 – 0442 69378

15. AERO BLASTERS

Publisher: Kemco (IMPORT)
Price: (see importer)

If you're one of the not-very-many people who've played this brilliant game in the arcades (under the name of *Air Busters* more likely than not), you won't need telling what a fantastic, all-action, exciting and varied blastathon it is. If you aren't one of *those people*, then be told right now – *Aero Blasters* is the fastest, meanest, sexiest, joypad-grippinglyest, sweatiest shoot-'em-up there's ever been.

It is more impressive-looking than most Mega Drive zappers, more innovatively designed, better off in the end-of-level boss department, and it has frighteningly fast and dangerous tunnel sections, which provide the biggest wide-eyed thrills you'll ever get from your console.

MEGA says: One of the best Mega Drive shoot-'em-ups ever without the tiniest shadow of a doubt. Your game collection shouldn't be without it.

FOR SALE: *Aeroblasters*
£17 – 071 733 4553

16. GOLDEN AXE 2 (INC. GOLDEN AXE)

Publisher: Sega
Price: £39.99

What's that? You want some beat-'em-ups? OK, here's a real golden oldie (well, a game with deep roots anyway). If you're one of those strange people who likes nothing better than to wander in straight lines through strange lands kicking lumps out of the previously-happy inhabitants, then you'll probably like *Golden Axe* better than anything else in the whole wide world.

The sequel did nothing to alter the linear gameplay (Ax, Gillius or Tyris still start heading right and just keep going) and the two games are to all intents and purposes identical. It's still a simple walk-along-and-hit-fire-a-lot-whenever-you-meet-anyone kind of affair, but the execution is lovely with impressively muscular sprites and some great attacking moves. The five big levels will keep you entertained for quite a while and, while it's all very repetitive, the scenery is pretty enough to make you want to keep at it until you see the end. Whether you'll want to play it again after that is a different matter altogether.

MEGA says: The best game in a very limited genre. But why are beat-'em-ups always so easy to complete? Who knows?

FOR SALE: *Golden Axe II*
£18 – 0732 352253

17. DESERT STRIKE

Publisher: EA
Price: £34.99

Yes, okay, so it's in extremely poor taste, but you can't deny that *Desert Strike* is one of the most excellent pieces of blasting fun that the Mega Drive's ever played host to. Sometimes it can feel like you're fighting the entire war yourself, what with missions to complete, hundreds of enemies to blast and all manner of stuff to rescue with your helicopter's all-purpose winch. But even if you're not the xenophobic type, you'll be hard pushed not to have a great time with this atmospheric and action-packed shoot-'em-up.

MEGA says: Never mind the plotline, go out and get yourself enlisted today. *Desert Strike* is a great game, and that's the only thing that really matters.

TO SWAP: *Desert Strike*
Swap plus £3 – 0522 510967
0623 64688

FOR SALE: *Desert Strike*
Offers – 091 384 9672
£20 – 0865 864296
£28 – 0234 857002
£20 – 091 274 2769

18. THUNDERFORCE 4

Publisher: Sega
Price: £39.99
Reviewed in Issue 1 of MEGA

The sequel to the sequel of the conversion of the coin-op looks prettier than ever before, but gameplay wise it offers nothing more than *Thunderforce 3*. If anything, the groovy graphics (and they really are rather groovy, er, "dadio") get in the way of the action – there's just too much going on on-screen at any one time.

MEGA says: Looks great, lots to blast through, looks great, solid shoot-'em-up action, looks great and er, nothing *really* that could be described as special. It really does look great though.

19. THUNDERFORCE 3

Publisher: Sega
Price: £35.99

Of course, with the arrival of *Thunderforce 4*, it might seem a bit ludicrous to rush out and buy this now. But if you don't, you'll be missing out on some of the best blasting mayhem this side of, er, anywhere. But not only that. You'll also be missing out on the chance to make your mates go "Woo!" at some of the best visual effects yet seen on the Mega Drive. It's not all cosmetics though – *Thunderforce 3* is also a damn fine shoot-'em-up in its own right. If you're a zapping fan, this is another one of those "must-haves", basically.

MEGA says: Gorgeous blaster which is perhaps slightly better to look at than play, but that's probably because it's so bloody wonderful to look at.

20. REVENGE OF SHINOBI

Publisher: Sega
Price: £34.99

Revenge Of Shinobi, the excellent follow-up to the popular arcade beat-'em-up, looks great and sounds excellent, and although you've seen the format a hundred times before, this one's so well done that you can forgive it any lack of originality.

MEGA says: Super stuff, with top special effects and just plain special gameplay (if you can be "plain special", that is).

TO SWAP: *Revenge Of Shinobi*
0823 664886
091 384 9672
(Jap) – 0768 899773
FOR SALE: *Revenge Of Shinobi*
£17 – 021 748 3498

21. TAZ-MANIA

Publisher: Sega
Price: £39.99

The most cartoon-like Sega game so far, *Taz-Mania* stars that lovable psychopath, the Tazmanian Devil, in a Sonic-like game of epic (in everything but game size) proportions. It's beautiful, it's hilarious, but it's also a bit repetitive and none too tough to get to the end of. If you've got a Looney Tunes-loving younger brother or sister, though (or if you *are* a Looney Tunes-loving younger brother or sister), this is absolutely ideal.

MEGA says: Brilliantly entertaining, but not all that demanding, *Taz-Mania* is perfect for the kids, and for those of you who can afford to spend lots of dosh on games which you'll finish in three days.

TO SWAP: *Taz-Mania*
0698 886295
0962 715030
0203 362885

FOR SALE: *Taz-Mania*
£25 – 202498

22. JAMES POND 2 – ROBOCOD

Publisher: EA
Price: £39.99

Converted from, but significantly improved upon, the 16-bit computer classic, *Robocod* was the game that took on Sonic at his own game and didn't make a half-bad stab at it. It's a little, er, spacey in parts, but for the most part this gigantic platformer is busy and impressive. Exceptionally pretty, and funny too, this is one of the best hedgehog clones you can buy.

MEGA says: Great little game, with a different feel to most platformers (largely thanks to your extendible character...). A good laugh, and no mistake.

TO SWAP: *James Pond 2*
Swap/Sell £15 – 0793 487511
Swap – 0823 664886
Swap £15 – 0365 658150
Swap – 0254 264427
Swap – 0768 899773

FOR SALE: *James Pond 2*
£20 – 071 733 4553
Sell £20/Swap – 051 928 1820
£20 – 0272 737107
£20 – 0227 274425

23. SIDE POCKET

Publisher: Data East (IMPORT)
Price: £35 (see importer)
Reviewed in Issue 1 of MEGA

A novel coin-op conversion with bells on. You can try to beat the one-player game, play a mate, or show off your skills in the trick game. Smart graphics, great sound and fun gameplay go to make a strange, but welcome breath of fresh air.

MEGA says: We all luv a game of pool, and this beats paying 30p a go down the pub, every time. (Well, not quite – Neil)

24. CASTLE OF ILLUSION

Publisher: Sega
Price: £39.99

Mickey Mouse, eh? Don't you just love him? No matter what he does, no matter where he goes, his little mousey ears always stay perfectly round. Yep, even when he appears in really lovely platform adventures like this one, with all manner of strange and beautiful Disney-style fantasy creatures trying to off him in a deeply unfriendly manner as he tries to rescue his sweet mouse babe from the excellently-named witch Mizrabel. What a trouper he is.

MEGA says: A lovely platform epic very much in the style of (whisper it) *Mario*, except without all that tedious head-butting palaver. Gorgeous to look at and

gorgeous to play. The whole family will love this one.

TO SWAP: *Castle Of Illusion*
0247 451041

FOR SALE: *Castle Of Illusion*
(Jap) £18 – 0732 352253

25. LHX ATTACK CHOPPER

Publisher: EA
Price: £39.99
Reviewed in Issue 1 of MEGA

The Mega Drive's first chopper-'em-up and only the second genuine flight sim (albeit in an action-orientated way). The graphics are supremely detailed and suffer from only a slight jerkiness while the action remains fast and, indeed, furious.

MEGA says: Anyone who's ever seen *Apocalypse Now* or *Wings Of The Apache* will relish this chance to spray heat-seeking death at anything that moves. And anyone who fancies "having a go" at developing their own military tactics and completing a whole Eastenders (long drawn-out series) of missions will find plenty to get their teeth stuck in to.

26. DECAP ATTACK

Publisher: Sega
Price: £39.99

Decap Attack (originally released as *Magical Hat Turbo Adventure*) may at first glance make you go "yuck". But if you persist past the first 20 seconds, you'll suddenly discover that you're having a brilliant time, thanks to the rollicking platform escapades that make up this wonderfully tasteless game. Controlling a character who can chuck his proper head (his name's Chuck D Head, good eh?) and who has an extra, telescopic, head in his ribcage is simply great fun, and the cheesy music complements the gameplay perfectly.

MEGA says: Ropeyish graphics, but don't let that put you off this gorgeous and funny platformer.

TO SWAP: *Decap Attack*
(Jap) – 0768 899773

27. GHOULS 'N' GHOSTS

Publisher: Sega
Price: £34.99

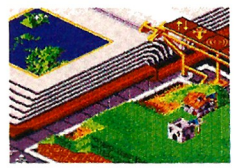
A frighteningly tough coin-op conversion, but hey, it's not as if you have to shovel money into the thing, so who cares? You certainly won't be seeing the end of this one during the same day you buy it, and that's even with infinite continues. The graphics and sound are practically flawless, as brave Sir Arthur scuttles his swathe through legions of platform-placed zombies, monsters and vultures. *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts* is simply one of the best arcade games around.

MEGA says: *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts* is the business – and, for once, the tough difficulty tuning guarantees decent value for money as well as being great short-term arcade fun. Go for it!

TO SWAP: *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts*
0254 – 264427
Swap plus £3 – 0522 510967

28. POPULOUS

Publisher: EA
Price: £39.99



Immensely strange and original God-simulator game in which you hold sway over the very shape of the land itself, as you try to create an army of followers to defeat an opposing deity. Slightly forbidding at first with a mass of controls to get the hang of, but once you're in, you'll probably never want to come back out.

MEGA says: One of the most compulsive games ever invented. There's nothing else like it on the MD so, egomaniacs everywhere, don't miss it.

TO SWAP: *Populous*
0842 762800
051 425 3380

FOR SALE:
Offers – 091 384 9672
£20 – 091 274 2769
Sell £22/Swap – 051 425 3380

29. TOE JAM AND EARL

Publisher: Sega
Price: £39.99

Speaking of multi-player action, though, it doesn't get a lot more entertaining than this. Toe jam (urgh) and Earl are two of the grooviest aliens you could ask to have a close encounter with, which is part of the reason why it's such a pleasure to help them out on their quest to rebuild their crashed spaceship. The rest of the reason, though, is the superbly manic and zany action which takes place as our two heroes career around the screen, causing havoc wherever they go. After a few plays, the lower levels tend to drag a bit (there's no password option), but this game is both original and insane. You'll love it.

MEGA says: Another OK game which becomes completely essential when played with someone else. Got any friends? Buy this. Haven't got any friends? Buy this and make some.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS CLASSIC GAME SEE PANEL OPPOSITE

FOR SALE: *Toe Jam & Earl*
Sell £20/Swap – 0484 432526
Sell £20/Swap – 0633 420370
£25 – 0442 69378
£28 – 0234 857002

30. SPEEDBALL 2

Publisher: Virgin Games
Price: £34.99
Reviewed in Issue 1 of MEGA

This game is Mega Drive violence at its most extreme. Nominally a future sports sim, *Speedball 2* is actually football meets rollerball meets bare-knuckle boxing in a frantic and immensely brutal festival of blood and guts. There's also plenty of room for skill and strategy, though, which means that for an all-round sporting

TOE JAM & EARL
NUMBER 29

Yo Man! Pump that funky bass, dude! Get hip and swinging in this far out game that sets new standards in two-player games. Check it out dudes, and respect!

Oi, Earl, you lazy git... get up, get down and get funky

Check this man! Two happenin' funky and downright hip aliens, from the planet Funkotron have crash-landed on Earth. Trouble is their amazing, righteous and pumping spaceship-cum-stereo system has been shattered and spread across an incredibly wide area. Can you help two homesick aliens find their spaceship piece by piece so they can go back home?

As the name of the game suggests, this game is at its best when you're playing with a mate.

The basic gameplay involves searching through each level to find the elevator to the next, but if there's a spaceship piece on the level, you've got to find that first. It sounds easy, but there's a myriad of weird and wonderful creatures out to stop you. They do this by poking you, treading on you, firing arrows at you or just scaring the living daylights out of you.

Enter a level, and you'll know immediately if there's a ship piece there or not

Toe Jam and Earl can collect items in the form of presents, some of which help them on their mission and some of which don't. It's great fun getting to know what's what, so try everything once. Interacting with the carrot man in later levels of the game can be very revealing.

Each level is big, and although you can access a map to see where you are, it only uncovers the sections you've already walked through. I mean showing where the spaceship pieces are before you've searched would be a cop out, wouldn't it?

Graphically, the game is excellent – the characters move and act with great hilarity. The sound is very funky, and you'll quite happily hum along to it as you play.

It is, however, the great gameplay which makes this game so enjoyable. Played by yourself, it can become tedious, but played with a mate, this is a real hit. The split-screen mode shows enough of the screen to still make the game enjoyable, and that means you can go off on your own and explore in any direction you want.

To play through all 25 levels, dealing with the various inhabitants is going to take some time. There's no password or battery back-up facility,but adding one would ultimately ruin the game.

If you're after some accessible action with humorous graphics, great sound and matchless two-player fun, then get this, or forever remain a sad *Sonic The Hedgehog* fan.

Toe Jam's found the missing ship piece, so it's time to head for the lift

Turn over

TOP 100

experience *Speedball 2* is hard to beat (up) – especially in two-player mode.

MEGA says: Very much an arcade sports game (rather than the more tactical approach favoured by, say, *John Madden Football*), this is about as good as arcade sports games get. *Speedball 2* is totally vicious and totally excellent.

31. PIT FIGHTER

Publisher: Tengen
Price: £37.99

Ooh look, it's another beat-'em-up. Ah yes, but wait... this one's different. How come? Well, it's got digitised graphics, guv. That means the fighters you take on in this simulation of that ugliest of "sports" (pit fighting, that is) look incredibly realistic, which means you can imagine that it's a real human being you're knocking the living daylights out of. You sad person.

MEGA says: Pretty dull and morally dubious beat-'em-up fare. You won't find much prettier BEUs, but gameplay-wise you could do a lot better than this.

32. SHINING IN THE DARKNESS

Publisher: Sega
Price: £49.99

A mammoth, gorgeous RPG (as opposed to a gorgeous mammoth RPG, which would be a completely different proposition involving attractive elephants, wouldn't it?) with lovely aesthetics and gameplay which will keep you entranced for months. *Shining In The Darkness* is probably the Mega Drive's most accessible RPG, so comes highly recommended to anyone who fancies giving the genre a try.

MEGA says: A bit of a must for RPG fans, but even if you're not into the genre, give this a try. You might find that you're pleasantly surprised.

TO SWAP: *Shining In Darkness*
091 386 5934

FOR SALE:
Shining In The Darkness
£25 – 0442 69378

33. PHANTASY STAR 2

Publisher: Sega
Price: £59.99

Not quite as big and sexy as *Phantasy Star 3*, obviously, but pretty impressive all the same.

MEGA says: Great stuff, but at this price it's strictly for the absolute fanatics.

FOR SALE: *Phantasy star II*
(Jap) £35 – 274425

34. F-22 INTERCEPTOR

Publisher: EA
Price: £39.99

There aren't many flight simulators around on the Mega Drive, which, to be honest, is most of the reason why this is the best one. The graphics are fab, but the gameplay gets repetitive a bit too quickly for our liking.

MEGA says: If you want a flight sim, this is about as good as they currently get. Luckily Microprose has some fantastic up, down, flying around, looping-the-loop-type stuff in the pipeline.

FOR SALE: *F22 Interceptor*
Sell £25/Swap – 0559 363323

35. STRIDER

Publisher: Sega
Price: £44.99

Amazing graphics, superb sound, lovely animation and some of the biggest and baddest enemies you'll ever meet, are the ingredients of *Strider*. Pretty simplistic platform-leaping beat-'em-up is the order of the day here, but *Strider* does it better than most, and it does it looking better than almost anything. Oh yeah, and the "running down the side of a mountain" sequence is just about worth the money by itself.

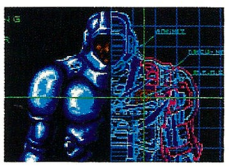
MEGA says: You'll finish it in two days, but if you want something which will show your friends the power of the Mega Drive, this is the game (second to only *Sonic*) that'll make them go "gosh, wow" the most.

TO SWAP: *Strider*
0962 715030
0823 664886

FOR SALE: *Strider*
£18 – 0565 634827
£28 – 0234 857002
£15 – 0784 242654

36. ESWAT

Publisher: Sega
Price: £34.99



Bearing only the slightest resemblance to the coin-op of the same name, *ESWAT* luckily manages to be an even better game than its arcade counterpart. It's got a bit more to it than the coin-op's limited beat-'em-up formula, and although it's still no *Sword Of Vermillion*, there's just about enough thinking to keep you interested to the end.

MEGA says: There are literally dozens of this type of game around, but this is one of the relatively few which are actually worth having. Pretty simplistic, but still involving and addictive.

TO SWAP: *Eswat*
(Jap) – 0482 502806
Swap/Sell £20 – 081 572 9439
Swap/Sell £24 – 0275 393397

FOR SALE: *Eswat*
£20 – 0742 683896

37. SHADOW DANCER

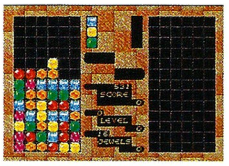
Publisher: Sega
Price: £34.99

ESWAT with a dog, basically.

MEGA says: More fab scrolling beat-'em-up action, and you'll find yourself getting really attached to your little ninja pooch, too. The baddies are truly bad and the ninja scum that Joe's fighting against put up a decent enough fight. There are plenty of secret bonuses and hidden goodies to keep the interest factor up. Well worth a bang – check it out.

38. COLUMNS

Publisher: Sega
Price: £34.99



The game they give away with the Game Gear, and it's easy to see why – it's worth buying one of the fabby little machines just to play this, except, of course, you don't have to. This brilliant cross between *Tetris* and *Klax* is better on the Mega Drive than anywhere else, thanks mainly to the fact that the graphics are big enough to let you actually see what's going on. great stuff solo, but the two-player head-to-head "flash" game is totally wonderful. The best Mega Drive puzzle game going.

MEGA says: Buy another joypad, buy *Columns*, and then invite some of your friends round. Then see if you can get them to leave...

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS CLASSIC GAME SEE PANEL ON OPPOSITE PAGE

FOR SALE: *Columns*
Offers – 091 384 9672

39. KID CHAMELEON

Publisher: Sega
Price: £34.99

Ultra-cute platform thang with lots of really neat touches, but it's too easy and not all that exciting. Sega hyped this game almost as much as *Sonic*, so they must have been a bit disappointed with its lack-lustre performance sales-wise. The game isn't at all bad, and remember – you don't have to be great to be good.

MEGA says: Not too bad, just don't listen to Sega.

TO SWAP: *Kid Chameleon*
081 960 2884

FOR SALE: *Kid Chameleon*
£20 – 051 928 1820

40. KRUSTY'S SUPER FUN HOUSE

Publisher: Flying Edge
Price: £39.99
Reviewed in Issue 1 of MEGA

The Simpsons always threatened to invade the world of Mega Drive games, but they arrived about six months too late to cash in on the height of the hype. Luckily for Krusty, his game is good enough to make a good impression in its own right. There's lots of puzzles, lots of cartoony graphics and lots of fun to be had by all.

MEGA says: *Krusty's Super Fun House* is one of a rare breed of game: a licensed title that manages to combine a big name with a decent game. Good rat-splatting stuff.

FOR SALE:
Krusty's Super Fun House
£25 – 0442 69378

41. TERMINATOR

Publisher: Virgin
Price: £39.99

You're really enjoying yourself, you're marvelling at the lush graphics, you're being blown away by the non-stop all-action platform shoot-'em-up gameplay, you're blasting through the fourth level and... er, then you finish it. That's it then, eh?

MEGA says: Lovely game, but there's not nearly enough of it.

TO SWAP: *Terminator*
Plus £3 – 0522 510967

42. TWO CRUDE DUDES

Publisher: Data East (IMPORT)
Price: (see importer)

Well, it's a beat-'em-up and it's got some crude dudes in it. Er...

MEGA says: A fairly accurate version of the coin-op *Crude Busters* and it's OK. The whole game looks good and plays OK but it's just too easy to finish. Same old story...

43. AFTERBURNER 2

Publisher: Sega
Price: £34.99

The arcade version of *Afterburner* (all style and no content) threw the player and his lunch all around a hydraulic cockpit while simultaneously flinging huge graphics at the screen so fast that all you could do was wrench the joystick around wildly, keep your finger locked on the trigger and hope desperately for the best.

Mega Drive *Afterburner* recreates the feel of the coin-op perfectly, except that you'll have to get someone to come round and jiggle your chair for you while you play. What else is there to say?

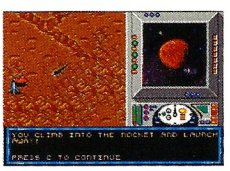
MEGA says: Er, this, I suppose. *Afterburner 2* (ie *Afterburner*) is excellent short-term blasting, but it's thinner than gold plating on a window, and there are plenty of other shoot-'em-ups that'll give you bigger thrills. Try *Hellfire* or *Aero Blasters* for starters.

FOR SALE: *Afterburner 2*
£20 – 0245 420377

TO SWAP: *Afterburner 2*
021 705 2106

44. BUCK ROGERS "COUNTDOWN TO DOOMSDAY"

Publisher: EA
Price: £49.99



Not one of the most spectacular games you'll ever see, but the game's got tons of depth. Searching around this futuristic strategic RPG thing will keep you interested, but MEGA wants to know why they left out the old Twiki robot?

MEGA says: Very nice, but wouldn't it have been better to use the licence for a good old-fashioned shoot-'em-up? MEGA thinks so.

TO SWAP: *Buck Rogers*
0842 762800

45. NEW ZEALAND STORY

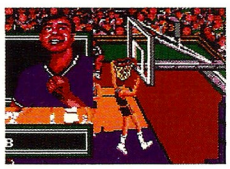
Publisher: Taito (IMPORT)
Price: (see importer)

Another classic coin-op that's seen incarnations on just about every format imaginable, but the Mega Drive version takes an unexpected twist by being less of a conversion than a rearrangement of the original. All the same features found in the arcade game are present and correct, but the level layouts and structures are almost completely different. While this is a bit of a bummer for arcade perfectionists, it means that *New Zealand Story* fans now have a whole new game to play, and that can't be a bad thing.

MEGA says: *New Zealand Story* on the Mega Drive is as cute, clever and addictive as it ever was, so who cares if all the bits are in different places? Not us, that's for sure.

46. TEAM USA BASKETBALL

Publisher: EASN
Price: £39.99
Reviewed in Issue 1 of MEGA



Incorporating *Bulls Vs Lakers* (the two games are basically the same) and replacing *Celtics Vs Lakers,* this is the best Mega Drive basketball game so far. Excellent two-player action and wacky signature moves make this the essential purchase for all basketball fans.

MEGA says: Shame its: a) just a tad too easy; and b) not quite up to the usual EASN standard. But apart from these two quibbles, it's lovely.

47. TRUXTON

Publisher: Sega
Price: £34.99

Shoot-'em-up, huh? Vertical scrolling, huh? Bit easy to beat, isn't it?

MEGA says: Well yes, but on the whole, *Truxton* is a decent enough effort. It's good fun to pick up and play every now and again, but it'll never change your life, or even give you one especially wonderful evening.

TO SWAP: *Truxton*
Swap – 0823 664886
Swap/Sell £20 – 0275 393397

48. DRAGON'S FURY

Publisher: Tengen
Price: £39.99
Reviewed in Issue 1 of MEGA

It's a pinball game.

MEGA says: And it's lovely.

49. OLYMPIC GOLD

Publisher: US Gold
Price: £39.99

The graphics may be lush, but at the root of it all, it's just a creative way to pummel the living daylights out of your joypad.

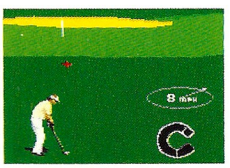
MEGA says: Pretty dull by yourself, but excellent fun when you've got a few mates round.

TO SWAP: *Olympic Gold*
0768 899773
0234 855383

FOR SALE: *Olympic Gold*
£17 – 0565 634827

50. WORLD CLASS LEADERBOARD

Publisher: US Gold
Price: £37.99



Well, it's pretty good, but it's not really *PGA Tour*, now is it?

MEGA says: No it isn't. Unless you're absolutely golf loopy nuts and just *have* to have every available sim, get *PGA* and settle for that.

51. BATTLE SQUADRON

Publisher: EA
Price: £39.99

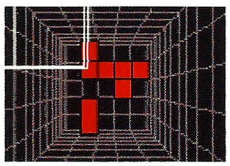
Amiga conversion time again, but this vertically-scrolling blaster looked pretty dated even when it originally appeared about two years ago, and it hasn't really improved with age. Good solid zapping action, but nothing to really hold your attention.

MEGA says: Bog-standard vertical zaperama with little or nothing to make it stand out from the crowd.

WANTED: *Battle Squadron*
£15 – 071 733 4553

52. BLOCKOUT

Publisher: EA
Price: £34.99



Your brain will never forgive you. Imagine *Tetris*, played looking down a well, with three-dimensional vector-graphic wire-frame blocks which can be moved, turned and rotated in each of the three axes. Having problems imagining it? Just you try playing it, mate.

MEGA says: Complete mind torture, but if you're a professional mathematician or more laid back than a particularly relaxed sloth, you'll get some serious puzzling fun out of this one.

53. F1 CIRCUS

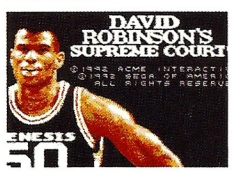
Publisher: Nichibutsu (IMPORT)
Price: (see importer)

This game is second only to the *Super Monaco GP* twins, *F1 Circus* looks ropey but plays well. The Formula One tie-in is well implemented and playing the game makes a fairly realistic representation of putting you in the cockpit of the real thing. In other words, you'll crash a lot.

MEGA says: If realism gets your motor running (even if it's at the expense of lush graphics), then check this out.

54. DAVID ROBINSON BASKETBALL

Publisher: Sega
Price: £39.99



The best of a whole clutch of

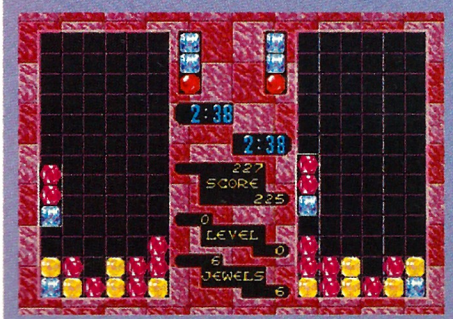
COLUMNS
NUMBER 38

More colourful than Tetris, and tougher than Klax, Columns is here to show you what a good puzzle game really is...

The fun "flash" game. Get rid of the orange one before the game finishes

Puzzle games, eh! When you've beaten the overlord of doom for the tenth time, and taking on the guise of some super cop doesn't really appeal any more, puzzle games are always there to give you a bit of light relief and perhaps a serious headache.

Yes, that seems to be the effect of a good puzzle game – it's easy to get into, it then becomes incredibly hard to master, and there's so much addictiveness in there that you just have to keep coming back for more. There's always some sort of theme in there somewhere too, but that's really only window dressing. And that, essentially, sums up *Columns*.



Here we are in the head-to-head game. You've got three minutes to battle it out with your mate. Get to it...

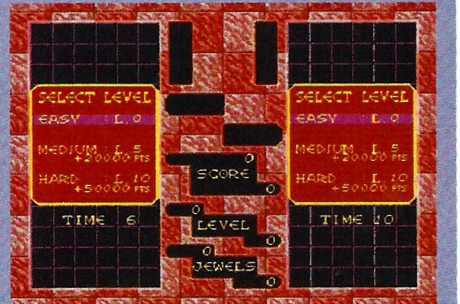
You've got to place a column of three falling jewels in the right place, so that the colours make up a row of three. These can be horizontal, vertical or diagonal rows – as long as you get three or more in any configuration, it doesn't matter. If you don't get rid of enough jewels quickly enough and the screen fills up to the top, it's game over.

Fortunately, though (or perhaps unfortunately if you've got a hot date waiting for you outside the cinema) there's no actual end to the game. You just work your way through one level after another, and the better you do the quicker the pace of the game. There's not a lot more you can say about *Columns*, expect that the number of options is overwhelming.

The two-player version is great, and if you get bored of playing normal *Columns*, you can play the "flash" game, where you have to get rid of a particular flashing jewel in the shortest time possible. This gives you a whole new strategy to work on, and the chance to play against (and maybe even humiliate) a close friend.

The graphics and sound are by no means earth-shattering, but they do their jobs very nicely. The real zest of playing *Columns*, however, is the sheer playability of the game. It's easy to control, easy to get to grips with, but very hard to stop playing.

Take a break from the usual platform, shoot-'em-up action that seems to take up about 90 percent of today's software and calm down (or not as the case may be) with a nice wholesome game of *Columns*. You know it makes sense.



The two-player game provides some tough action, depending on the level you select

Turn over

basketball games recently released by various people. Though still not up to *Team USA Basketball* this one boasts by far the smoothest, fastest action, and some of the nicest effects too. If basketball's your bag (ahem), this is your kind of shopping trolley. (What? – Ed.)

MEGA says: Bouncy bouncy, bouncy bouncy, fun, fun, fun, fun, fun. (What? – Ed.) Tiggers. And basketballs. (Ah – Ed.)

55. SUPER HANG-ON

Publisher: Sega
Price: £19.99

Road Rash, without all the violence. Yes, we know it sounds like a bit of a bad idea, but if what you're after is pure high-speed racing thrills, then this is still your best bet. A near-perfect rendition of the coin-op, too – just try to stop yourself from leaning into those bends...

MEGA says: It looks lovely, it plays beautifully, it'll last for ever. Along with *Super Monaco* and *Road Rash*, the only genuinely essential racing game for your Mega Drive.

TO SWAP: *Super Hang On* (Jap) – 0768 899773

FOR SALE: £14 – 021 705 2106

56. SPORTS TALK BASEBALL

Publisher: Sega USA (IMPORT)
Price: (see importer)
Reviewed in Issue 1 of MEGA

A decent baseball game that tells you just what's going on as it goes on.

MEGA says: As with *Joe Montana Football 2*, great for people with no friends.

57. DODGEBALL

Publisher: Sega Japan (IMPORT)
Price: (see importer)
Reviewed in Issue 1 of MEGA

Volleyball meets *Speedball* in this strange, but entertaining Japanese game. The idea is to knock your opponent's team members out of the court with a high-speed chuck of (what can only be) either a cannon or medicine ball. Decidedly strange, inevitably violent and great fun – like sellotaping a vulture to your friend's anorak.

MEGA says: Not sure about this vulture/anorak business, but *Dodgeball* remains a good two (or more) player game.

58. ARCUS ODYSSEY

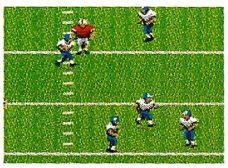
Publisher: Renovation (IMPORT)
Price: (see importer)

A lovely looking 3D game, which scores points for offering some of the best simultaneous two-player action going.

MEGA says: *Arcus Odyssey* is OK by us.

59. JOE MONTANA 2 – SPORTS TALK FOOTBALL

Publisher: Sega
Price: £34.99



Nope, sorry, even this sequel to the original "not too bad but let's face it, it's not as good as *John Madden*" American football game fails to lace the boots or plump the padding of the boy from Electronic Arts. Nice try but no cigar.

MEGA says: It's not as good as *John Madden Football* but it talks to you. Perfect for gridiron fanatics with no friends.

60. FIGHTING MASTERS

Publisher: Treco (IMPORT)
Price: (see importer)

Solid two-player beat-'em-up action is the name of this lovely looking game. If only the beast was a bit more substantial in one-player mode.

MEGA says: Two-player pommelling can be a great laugh (especially with 12 intergalactic hard cases to play with), but don't bother with *Fighting Masters* if you're a solo scrapper.

61. CHUCK ROCK

Publisher: Virgin Games
Price: £39.99

This is an old Amiga game which has been brushed up a bit for the Mega Drive and, as you might expect, it's a bit of a lush looker. What you might not expect is a fabby prehistoric platform game which plays like an episode of The Flintstones (except it's funnier) and in which you dispose of your enemies by bouncing them off your gigantic beer belly. Nope, you might not expect that, but it's what you'll get anyway. Ha.

MEGA says: A really enjoyable platformer, packed to the brim with variation, lovely little touches and more imagination than a dozen lesser efforts in this overloaded genre.

TO SWAP: *Chuck Rock* 091 386 5934

62. TETRIS

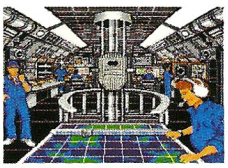
Publisher: (IMPORT)
Price: (see importer)

Okay, hands up everyone who doesn't know about *Tetris*. Three of you, eh? Well, pay attention this time. Tsch.

MEGA says: The biggest and sexiest puzzle game of all eternity comes to the Mega Drive. If, by some incredibly unlikely fluke, you don't already have a *Tetris* game, then get this one now. Either that or you'll have to buy a Game Boy.

63. 688 ATTACK SUB

Publisher: SEGA
Price: £34.99



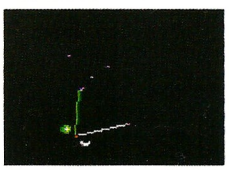
Nice, atmospheric submarine simulator with a bit of zapping and some pleasant aesthetics.

MEGA says: PING!... Not the kind of thing you ever PING!... imagine anybody buying a Mega PING!... Drive for, but good at what it does.

FOR SALE: *688 Attack Sub* £28 – 0234 857002

64. STAR CONTROL

Publisher: Ballistic
Price: £39.99



Massive but not actually all that complicated space strategy trading thing with zappy and tactical bits thrown in as a life-preserver.

MEGA says: A bit of a lark with a chum if you're after something different, but kinda dull if you're on your own.

FOR SALE: *Star Control* £21 – 021 705 2106 £26 – 0207 542409

65. HERZOG ZWEI

Publisher: Sega
Price: £34.99

Eight-way scrolling, view-from-above, simultaneous two-player, head-to-head, split-screen shoot- and think-'em-up with bags of strategy. It could have been a classic, but didn't quite manage to hang together.

MEGA says: Almost excellent for two-player head-to-head. If you can pick it up cheap, you may love it.

66. SPIDERMAN

Publisher: Sega
Price: £39.99

"Spiderman, Spiderman, does whatever a spider can." So how come you never see him getting trapped in a bath then, eh?

MEGA says: Pretty run-of-the-mill platform game, lifted out of the ordinary by some pretty spiffy graphics and a nice line in enemies. This is, however, still really only for web-slinging fanatics and the Manic Street Preachers (evidently they're big fans).

FOR SALE: *Spiderman* £17 – 021 748 3498

67. CORPORATION

Publisher: Virgin Games
Price: £39.99

Gigantic and tough 3D, RPG-ish Amiga conversion with some top 3D blasting bits in it. The idea is that you're a secret agent briefed with the unenviable job of trying to establish whether rumours of a company creating killer genetic mutants is true or not. It's involving and absorbing although it can get a bit repetitive if constantly creeping around mutant-infested buildings inches from death, isn't your idea of a good night out.

MEGA says: For RPG fun with a bit more blasting *and* a bit more brain-stretching than usual, this is a pretty damn good buy.

68. TEST DRIVE 2

Publisher: Ballistic
Price: £34.99

A two-player, head-to-head driving game that sounds as if it should be great, but somehow never lives up to expectations.

MEGA says: Enjoyable serious-ish, two-player driving/crashing game, which you may never be able to buy. Life's a bitch, eh?

FOR SALE: *Test Drive 2* £20 – 081 657 2108

69. TROUBLE SHOOTER

Publisher: Vic Tokai (IMPORT)
Price: (see importer)

Madison and Crystal take to the skies to kick some alien butt in an entertaining shoot-'em-up with a choice of five special weapons, some seriously whacked-out bosses and five levels of constant action.

MEGA says: A tad too small and a tad too easy, but while it lasts, *Trouble Shooter* is right good stuff.

70. ARNOLD PALMER TOURNAMENT GOLF

Publisher: Sega
Price: £34.99

More golf? Haven't we covered that one already? Of "course" we have! (Another joke like that and you're fired. I'm not joking – Ed.)

MEGA says: *PGA Tour's* the game you want.

71. GLEY LANCER

Publisher: NCS (IMPORT)
Price: £35 (see importer)
Reviewed in Issue 2 in MEGA

Another shoot-'em-up to add to the collection, but at least this one has got something different. The different firing patterns of your sister pods (that follow you around) add a good deal of difficulty to the proceedings

MEGA says: The weapon systems are fun and they make this shoot-'em-up stand out from the rest.

72. GAMES – THE WINTER CHALLENGE

Publisher: Ballistic
Price: £39.99

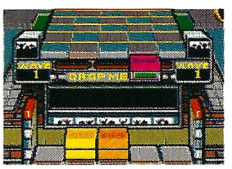
Pretty run-of-the-mill snowbound sports sim with eight ice-tastic events. As ever, lots of laughs with your buddies, but a real snoozeathon if you try it solo.

MEGA says: This one's been kind of overtaken by *Olympic Gold* as the Mega Drive's première multi-event sports game, but it's still a good example of the genre. It's just not a particularly outstanding genre, is all.

One claim to fame that *Games* can cling to as its own, however, is that it is Ballistic's best ever game. Hooray!

73. KLAX

Publisher: Tengen
Price: £34.99



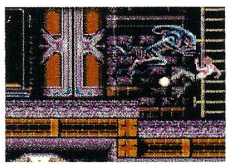
A massive coin-op cult (ie hardly anyone played it but everyone who did, loved it to bits), *Klax* is one of the best puzzle games ever. Unlike *Tetris* et al, you get a bit of scope for your own strategies instead of just needing lightning reactions, although you'll have to have those too. Very original and excellently designed, with a groovy two-player head-to-head game to boot, *Klax* will test your speed, sight, and spatial perception, all at the same time. Can you handle it?

MEGA says: *Columns, Tetris, Blockout* and *Klax* – the only

puzzle games you'll ever need. Geniuses shouldn't be without any of them.

74. ALIEN 3

Publisher: Flying Edge
Price: £34.99



Strangely reminiscent of *Terminator*, but then when you realise that both games come from the programmers at Probe, maybe it's not such a big surprise after all. This time you're Ripley and you're faced with the task of machine-gunning, grenade-chucking and alien-blasting your way through platform after platform of action.

MEGA says: Nothing special, and certainly nothing to get excited about. Without the atmospheric effects and intro of *Terminator* the game falls into the ranks of all the other seen-it-all-before platformers.

FOR SALE: *Alien 3*
£17 – 021 748 3498

TO SWAP: *Alien 3*
0962 715030

75. JAMES POND

Publisher: EA
Price: £34.99

The prequel to *Robocod*, but a more inferior game. Some cute platform/swimming around fun, but nothing that'll really set your head on fire. Er, not that you'd especially want it to.

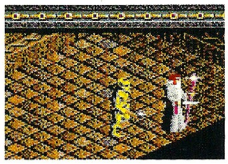
MEGA says: The 12 levels won't last you too long, and you'll probably get a bit bored before the end, anyway. This is, however, still good fun for a few days.

76. TWINKLE TALE

Publisher: WAS (IMPORT)
Price: £35 (see importer)
A fun, original and addictive shoot-'em-up, that suffers from begin too easy. The seven levels are varied and the end-of-level bosses look great, but you'll finish it within two days.
MEGA says: It's great fun, and it's a cute shoot-'em-up. It's just a damn shame the thing is so easy to complete.

77. THE IMMORTAL

Publisher: EA
Price: £39.99



A massive but ropey-looking RPG and with loads of blood 'n' guts definitely one for the gore-thirsty gameplayer. It's very slick but very repetitive and it's all over very quickly. Ah well!

MEGA says: It's an OK game, and some will flip over the graphics, but think very carefully before you blow £40 on this game.

TO SWAP: *The Immortal*
Swap plus £3 – 0522 510967

FOR SALE: *The Immortal*
£20 – 091 274 2769

78. DARIUS 2

Publisher: Taito (IMPORT)
Price: (see importer)
You wanna see something different? Then how about seeing seven different endings? Now that is a way of extending a game's lifespan. This classy, sideways-scrolling shoot-'em-up offers enough to earn it a place in the Top 100, but it doesn't quite break any new ground to position it higher than this.

MEGA says: Nice graphics, nice sound, nice challenge – but nothing new whatsoever. An above-average sideways-scroller that's worth a look.

79. MIGHT AND MAGIC

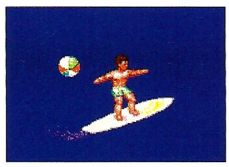
Publisher: Sega
Price: £49.99

A drastically over-expensive game with a dated control interface and crap graphics. But this is still a deep and absorbing role playing game. You can, however, do much better for your money.Check out the *Phantasy Star* series to see what I mean.

MEGA says: This one's past its prime, to be honest.

80. CALIFORNIA GAMES

Publisher: Sega
Price: £39.99

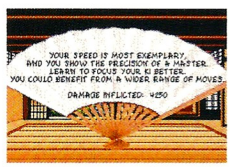


Half-pipe skateboarding, foot-bag, roller-skating, surfing and BMXing: those Californians sure know how to have a great time, don't they? This multi-event game is a lot of fun to get into, but there's no real long-term appeal.

MEGA says: Put the £40 in a bank account for about fifty years at 12% interest, then go to the USA yourself. Sorted.

81. BUDOKAN

Publisher: EA
Price: £39.99



Martial arts-type beat-'em-up, which requires a little more thought than most. At the end of the day, it's still a lot of wiggling the joypad, hitting the buttons and hoping for the best, though.

MEGA says: If beating computer people up (in four different "sporting" events), is where you get your thrills, this is one of the less brain-rotting ways in which you can go about it.

TO SWAP: *Alien 3*
Swap plus £3 – 0522 510967

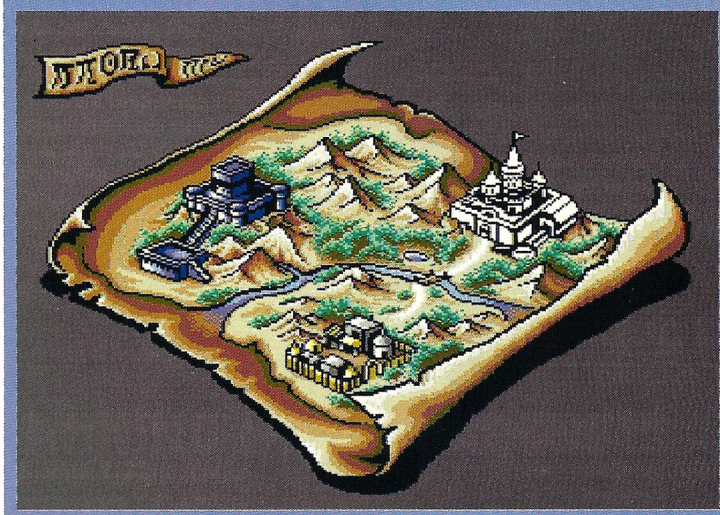
82. ZERO WING

Publisher: SEGA
Price: £34.99

Of all the millions of horizontally-scrolling shoot-'em-ups for the Mega Drive, *Zero Wing* is probably, er, the easiest. You'll finish this within three attempts, which is a bit of a shame as it's otherwise about as good as the genre gets. Lots of nice big aliens, smooth and precise control, and decent weaponry make it lots of fun to play, but there's not much point when you've already finished it!

SHINING IN THE DARKNESS
NUMBER 32

You've got to rescue the beautiful princess and your father – just a normal every day occurrence for a knight of the realm, I guess.



Here's the map, and boy is this going to take some time to finish. Check out the castle first, then the village, and finally the labyrinth

If you're looking to buy an RPG, then you've really got to know exactly what you want to get out of it. If you want good graphics, an easy control system and a realistic plot, then MEGA's guess is that you want *Shining in the Darkness*.

The plot is simple. An evil dark lord has kidnapped your princess. OK, so compared to the goings-on of today's Royal family this may not be such earth-shattering news, but when you also hear that your father has gone missing with her, you are genuinely traumatised and decide to set off on a heroic mission.

So, you're off to seek out both your father and the princess and teach that evil, dark lord a lesson, once and for all.

By using the castle and the town to search for clues, you must negotiate the dark lords labyrinth and search out information which will help you attain your goals.

Coming by this information, however, is not going to be easy. The labyrinth is crawling with all sorts of creatures and they don't take kindly to visitors. By using your skill and cunning, however, you can defeat them and then move further in for the real kill.

If you croak in battle, you'll be reincarnated by the guy at the shrine. He'll also get rid of any poisons in your body

You can interact with the various humans you come across. Some will simply engage in small talk, while others will let slip little pieces of important information. You are strongly advised to talk to anyone and everyone.

It's all very intense and realistic, with good characters, enemies and graphics. The naturally slow pace of the game though will put many people off in the short-term, but the excellent interaction and plot deepen as you get into things and the challenge also becomes harder, so stick at it even if you get stuck early on.

If you're after something to take you away from the usual platform and shoot-'em-ups, and you don't mind using your brain to work out some very tricky problems, *Shining in the Darkness* is a good example of how good an RPG really can be. Shame other games of this type aren't normally as good.

Here's your chance to buy some goodies that might come in useful later on

Turn over

TOP 100

MEGA says: A really lovely, playable shoot-'em-up, but way, way too easy for all but the most unco-ordinated.

FOR SALE: Zero Wing (Jap)
£20 – 0732 352253

83. THUNDERFORCE 2

Publisher: Sega
Price: £34.99
Basically, *Thunderforce 3* with some different scrolling bits, but not quite as good.

MEGA says: OK, but why bother with this when there's *Thunderforce 3* (or *Thunderforce 4* for that matter) out there? Or *Aero Blasters* or *Hellfire,* come to that.

84. TURRICAN

Publisher: Ballistic
Price: £39.99
A supremely popular home computer game, but maybe that just shows how easy all those Amiga and ST owners are to please. *Turrican* is an absolutely colossal platform-leaping, shoot-'em-upping, landscape-exploring, epic of a game. But after a while you start thinking, "Oh good, another 100 screens to plough through before I get to the next interesting bit. I wouldn't mind, but they're exactly the same as the last 100 screens".

MEGA says: It's decent enough for a while, but if you've got the patience or the high boredom threshold needed to get to the end, you're a better man than any of us.

FOR SALE: *Turrican*
£26 – 0207 542409

85. EUROPEAN CLUB SOCCER

Publisher: Virgin Games
Price: £39.99
This football game was previously seen on home computer formats as the extremely popular *Manchester United Europe.* The fact that it is now the best Mega Drive football game around isn't so much down to it being brilliant, but because there are only about two competitors, both of which are rubbish. Still, this is slick, fast and enjoyable, and although it's easy to beat, you'll get months of fun from the two-player mode. Well worth a look for footy fans.

MEGA says: The undisputed Mega Drive soccer king, but that title will probably go out of the window when Mega Drive's *Kick Off* makes an appearance. Wait for that and then make your own judgement.

86. FATAL REWIND

Publisher: EA
Price: £39.99

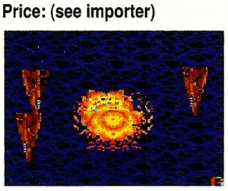
You may know this re-titled computer-game classic better as *The Killing Game Show.* It's like *Rainbow Islands* in many ways (without the gameplay), but with big butch metallic graphics and a little bit more to think about – like how impressive the interactive action replay feature is. There's no more going back miles when you get killed either – you just watch your last performance, then take over a split second before you made that last silly mistake. Excellently compulsive platforming fun, if you like that sort of thing.

MEGA says: If you fancy something a bit different from the ordinary cutesy-graphics formula stuff that is most Mega Drive platform games (and who doesn't from time to time?), then *Fatal Rewind* could be the game for you.

TO SWAP: *Fatal Rewind*
£15 – 0784 242654

87. SUPER AIRWOLF

Publisher: Kyugu (IMPORT)
Price: (see importer)



Super Airwolf is known as *Crossfire* in the US and that should be enough to tell you that this game's got absolutely nowt to do with *Airwolf* – it's just an old vertically-scrolling shoot-'em-up with a new name stuck on it for a quick licence to cash-in. Fortunately (for us) though, it is quite a good old vertically-scrolling shoot-'em-up, but it's still nothing you haven't seen a dozen times before.

MEGA says: One of the best efforts in the vertical-blasting genre, but worthwhile only if you don't already have half-a-dozen of the little blighters. Groovy soundtrack though.

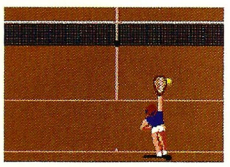
88. EL VIENTO

Publisher: Renovation (IMPORT)
Price: (see importer)
What do you expect to hear about yet another bog-standard platform beat-'em-up? That the name means "The Double-Decker Bus" in Spanish? That'd be interesting, wouldn't it? If only it were true...

MEGA says: Not true, though. Yet another bog-standard beat-'em-up. Sorry.

89. GRAND SLAM TENNIS

Publisher: Telenet (IMPORT)
Price: (see importer)



Good fun in two-player mode, but severely limited for a solo outing. We could describe this mediocre tennis game as a load of balls, but that would be a tad harsh, so we won't.

MEGA says: Unfortunately, this is the Mega Drive's only tennis game but it really isn't anything special. But...

90. GADGET TWINS

Publisher: GameTek (IMPORT)
Price: £35 (see importer)
Reviewed in Issue 2 of MEGA

It's cute and it's playable, but it's not exactly an original idea, is it? Good fun bashing fun in the short-term and the two-player option is a good idea.

MEGA says: It's one of those games you either love or hate.

91. ROLLING THUNDER 2

Publisher: Namco (IMPORT)
Price: (see importer)
The original *Rolling Thunder* was a fantastic coin-op, and *Rolling Thunder 2* on the Mega Drive is a fair copy. But the sprite movement is severely limited, letting down what could have been a great, basic platform-shooting game.

MEGA says: Not bad at all, but not in the same league as *Revenge Of Shinobi* et al.

92. JEWEL MASTER

Publisher: SEGA
Price: £34.99
This is a platformer which has some nice touches of originality (wearing different combinations of rings creates different special weapons), but you don't have to use any of the clever stuff in order to finish it inside two days. Insanely easy and not very exciting.

MEGA says: Not really a jewel, more of a decanter set.

93. TALMIT'S ADVENTURE (MARVEL LAND)

Publisher: Sega
Price: £39.99
Super-cutesy platforming action, like *Sonic The Hedgehog* with more primary colours. It looks fabulous and plays better than it looks, so why don't you go out and get it?

MEGA says: One of the best platformers around, and one of the few games which can lure girls to your joypad too.

94. BATMAN

Publisher: Sega USA (IMPORT)
Price: (see importer)
Nothing massively (or even tinily) original here, just lots of wandering around Bat-platforms and Bat-mazes beating up Bat-opponents. There's plenty of Bat-action but really not that many thrills.

MEGA says: Not bad, in fact really quite good. But, y'know, if you're *really* after a Batman game on the Mega Drive, look out for *Batman Returns.* (Batman Returns is reviewed on page 42 of this issue of MEGA)

95. ALISIA DRAGOON

Publisher: Sega
Price: £39.99

Just what the Mega Drive world was crying out for, a female hero in charge of a bunch of over eager dragons.

MEGA says: Er, the best dragon-based platform game around. Probably.

TO SWAP: *Alisia Dragoon*
Swap plus £4 – 0768 899773

96. CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THE AVENGERS

Publisher: Data East
Price: £39.99

A reasonable platform beat-'em-up and comic fans will be glad of some superhero action. It's too easy in one-player mode though, and the only mileage you could get out of this would be with a mate.

97. BONANZA BROS.

Publisher: Sega
Price: £34.99

Robo and Mobo set out on a night of breaking and entering in this two-player coin-op conversion. It's all quite fun and the idea is clever, but the arcade version never made enough of the two-player interaction so there was never any hope of the Mega Drive version being any better.

MEGA says: Limited two-player fun and don't attempt a one-player game.

98. GYNOUG

Publisher: Sega
Price: £39.99

Ha, so you thought this was just another horizontally-scrolling shoot-'em-up. No sirree. This one's got some very good graphic bits and a very silly name. I mean how DO you pronounce that?

MEGA says: Alright, alright, so Gynoug's quite good in a small and fiddly kinda way. But if you've got this far, you should already have at least five better blasters, so why spend another £40 on this 'un?

FOR SALE: *Gynoug*
£20 – 0823 282844

99. FORGOTTEN WORLDS

Publisher: Sega
Price: £39.99

This is a very faithful clone of the coin-op of the same name, except that the Mega Drive doesn't have the rotating-knob controller which allowed you to fire in eight directions independently of movement. Inconveniently, that was pretty much the crux of the arcade game, but apart from that (er...) this does a pretty respectable job of recreating the coin-op experience.

MEGA says: Pity it wasn't a very good coin-op then, isn't it?

100. M1 ABRAMS BATTLE TANK

Publisher: Sega
Price: £39.99
Battlezone for the nineties as you trundle around a fast-moving landscape, blasting an impressively wide range of enemies over loads and loads of top tank-based combat missions. This game is ideal for anyone who may have ever wished they'd been born a tuna.

MEGA says: An entertaining war sim that's a good deal livelier than you might expect. It's different and fun. Try it, you never know, you might like it.

FOR SALE: *M1 Abrams Tank*
£20 – 0742 683896

NEXT MONTH...

- More new games slotted into the system
- More readers' small ads – fill in the coupon on the opposite page if you're looking for a change of cart
- More past masters. If you like the sound of one of the classic games reviewed in this section, you may be able to pick it up cheaply through the small ads

TOP100 POSITIONS

688 Attack Sub	63	Krusty's Super Fun House	40
Aero Blasters	15	Lemmings	6
Afterburner 2	43	LHX Attack Chopper	25
Alien 3	74	M1 Abrams Battle Tank	100
Alisia Dragoon	95	Might and Magic	79
Arcus Odyssey	58	New Zealand Story	45
Arnold Palmer Golf	70	NHLPA Hockey	3
Batman	94	Olympic Gold	49
Battle Squadron	51	PGA Tour Golf	12
Blockout	52	Phantasy Star 2	33
Bonanza Bros	97	Phantasy Star 3	14
Buck Rodgers	44	Pit Fighter	31
Budokan	81	Populous	28
California Games	80	Quackshot	8
Captain America	96	Rainbow Islands	11
Castle of Illusion	24	Revenge of Shinobi	20
Chuck Rock	61	Road Rash	10
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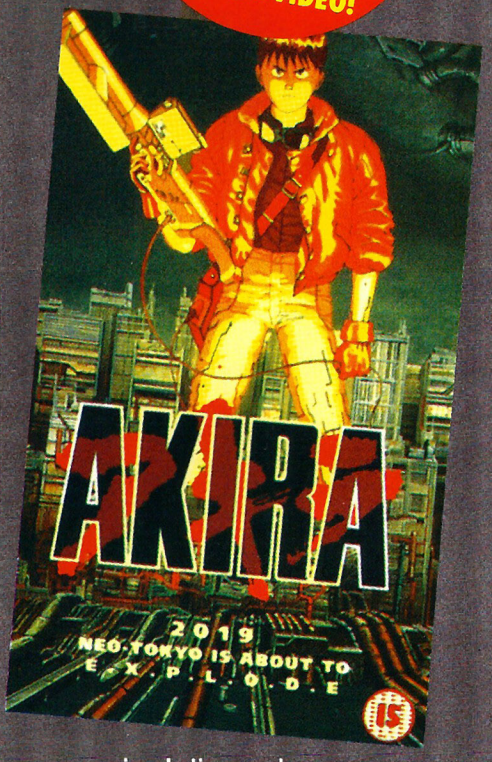

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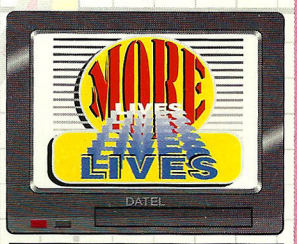

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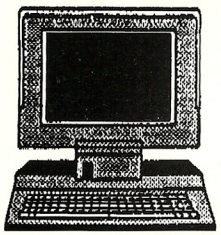

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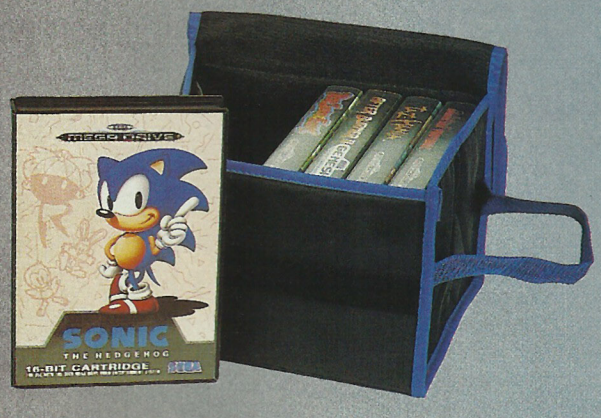

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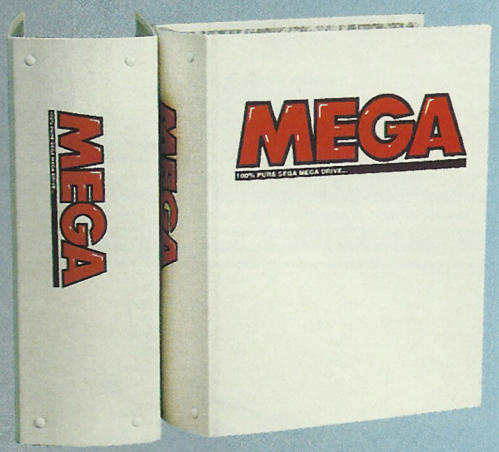

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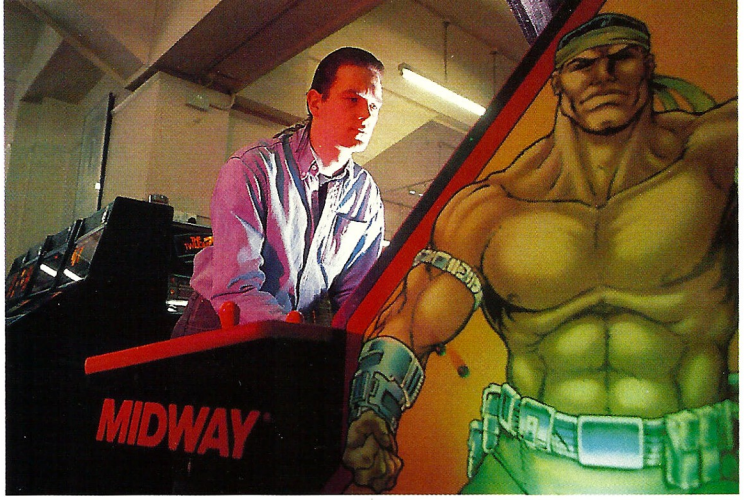
ROAD WORK

Most Mega Drive games are coin-op conversions. With this in mind, MEGA sent Paul Mellerick and photographer Jude Edginton to The Olympia Centre in Weston-Super-Mare to check out the latest arcade games. Here's what they found and what might (just might) appear on the Mega Drive in the not so distant future...

HOT SLOTS



TOTAL CARNAGE
MIDWAY – 40p a go

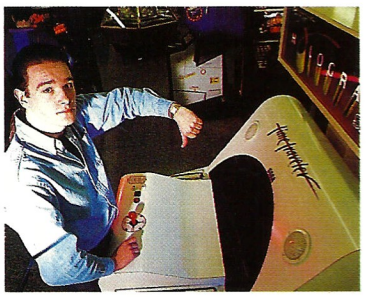
HOW HOT?

Midway is the company behind the great *Smash TV* arcade game, the game which recently made an unfortunate appearance on the Mega Drive (see issue one of MEGA, page 57). Well, the sequel to *Smash TV* has been in the arcade for quite some time now, and it's a real cracker.

The game's called *Total Carnage*, and never has a game title been more apt. You control either Captain Carnage or Major Mayhem (simultaneously if you like) on a quest to rid the world of a mad dictator. The game incorporates the same great adrenaline-pumping action as *Smash TV*, but it's bigger, harder, grosser and generally a lot louder – essential arcade action.

MEGA DRIVE, OR NOT?

You can expect to see this game on the Mega Drive before too long. Let's hope, however, that a special joystick is designed to go with *Total Carnage*, so that the game isn't as disappointing as *Smash TV*.



TIME TRAVELLER
SEGA – 50p a go

HOW HOT?

Time Traveller is a *Dragon's Lair* rip-off, which uses a hologram projection system to display real TV images.

It's tough in an uninspiring way, and you'll give up after your first quid's worth.

MEGA DRIVE, OR NOT?

It might appear on some format soon, but it won't be anything like the coin-op.

X-MEN
KONAMI – 30p a go

HOW HOT?

This Konami coin-op is doing the rounds at the moment. *X-Men* has been out for a couple of months, and in an inferior arcade you might have seen the four-player version. Well, just take a look at the size of this one – six people can play at once, on two screens. Wow!

The wowness of this comic strip inspired coin-op doesn't stop there either. Magneto (arch-enemy of the X-Men since day one) is on the warpath and you've got to stop him. Choose from any one of the six X-Men available (Cyclops, Storm, Wolverine, Colossus, Nightcrawler and Dazzler) and then set to work against the myriad of enemies out to get you.

Meet up with the end-of-level super baddie and then move onto the next one. There's nothing ground-breaking here, but it's so well done that you can't help but love it. Big sprites and graphics, and sound you'll find hard to believe, make it well worth having a go, even if you've played this type of game before.

MEGA DRIVE, OR NOT?

This is certain to be converted to the Mega Drive, and if it isn't, then... er, well, I'll eat something very nasty.

HOT ROD
SEGA – 30p a go

HOW HOT?

Hot Rod is an old four-player *Super Sprint* clone, which involves racing around a twisty-turny track faster than everyone else.

Graphics and gameplay are simplistic, but the four-player game is good fun.

MEGA DRIVE, OR NOT?

It's amazing that this game wasn't converted to the Mega Drive long ago. It would be great to play with the new four-player adaptor (see page ?? for news of this), but the game hasn't appeared yet, so it's really rather doubtful that it ever will.

EXOREX
VIRTUALITY – £1 a go

HOW HOT?
In this virtuality game, you manoeuvre a tank-like machine around a certain play area. You control this by using two joysticks – one to go forward or back and the other to go left and right.

While driving through this area, you'll come across some other tanks. These are what you've got to hit. Using the helmet to target the sight, you can look around and then if you spot something, fire at it. The gameplay is somewhat limited, but it is good fun, and this is probably the best virtuality game around.

MEGA DRIVE, OR NOT?
It's unlikely that a Mega Drive or Mega CD version will ever appear.

F1 EXHAUST NOTE
SEGA – 50p a go

HOW HOT?
The general buzz around the *F1 Exhaust Note* coin-op suggested that this game might be something special, as, indeed, it is.

This game is as real to F1 as you can get in an arcade. It is very similar to *Super Monaco GP*, but it has more realistic graphics, and you actually have to use the break. It's an intense and very well executed game, which takes some time to get to grips with.

MEGA DRIVE, OR NOT?
A Mega Drive or Mega CD conversion might follow. It would have to be tweaked, but it would be a cracker nonetheless.

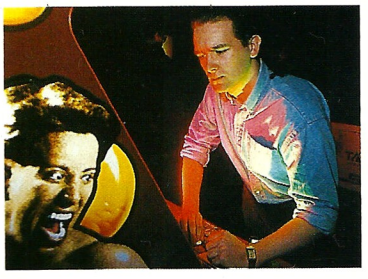
LETHAL ENFORCERS
KONAMI – 50p a go

HOW HOT?
Konami's latest coin-op is called *Lethal Enforcers*. This game seems to have taken all the elements of that latest batch of shooting laser-disc games (*Who Shot Johnny Rock* and *Mad Dog McRee*) and put them in one little cabinet with two pistols.

In the simultaneous two-player game, you take on the role of two coppers, who are out to stop a gang of thugs.

The graphics and sound are fab, and no delay in shooting makes for some serious action. It's tough too, and well worth the money – you'll be playing it for ages.

MEGA DRIVE, OR NOT?
You probably won't be seeing it in its full form, but a toned down version using the Mega CD and the new Menacer gun could be quite good fun.



MORTAL KOMBAT
MIDWAY – 50p a go

HOW HOT?
From Midway comes the latest arcade beat-'em-up, which is a cross between *Pit Fighter* and *Street Fighter 2*.

It's called *Mortal Kombat* and it's *very* impressive. Full screen sampled characters beat seven shades of something beginning with S out of each other, using their own natural abilities. All the special moves are hidden (à la *Street Fighter 2*), but the gameplay lacks that spark to make it interesting. It's good fun to begin with, but you won't play this for as long as you played *Street Fighter 2*.

MEGA DRIVE, OR NOT?
A Mega CD version wouldn't look as good as the arcade version, and we wouldn't want it anyway. We just want *Street Fighter 2* (yeeaahhh!).

GOLDEN AXE II
SEGA – 40p a go

HOW HOT?
Out go the characters from the original game and in come four completely new and angry ones.

Death Adder's back, however, and the plot and gameplay remain the same. It's two-player simultaneous fun, with fantastic graphics and sound, as well as some wicked special effects. It's just a shame the gameplay isn't exactly original.

MEGA DRIVE, OR NOT?
Golden Axe II: Return of Death Adder will definitely be appearing on the Mega Drive, probably as *Golden Axe III*.

You see, *Golden Axe II* (ripped and tipped in issue one of MEGA) was a Mega Drive-only sequel, so *Golden Axe II* in the arcade is actually *Golden Axe III* on the Mega Drive. Confused? You should be.

Basically, you should be looking forward to another classic *Golden Axe* game on your Mega Drive.

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Yes, we want to see you holding your copy of MEGA on television. If you feel yourself rising to the challenge, and fancy winning your very own coin-op in the process, turn to page 106 of this edition of MEGA for further details.

MEGA MOUTH

Hi, my name's Neil West. I'm into dangerous sports, cinema, theatre and Mott The Hoople. If you'd like a date with me, write to the usual address, enclosing a photograph of yourself (No old boilers, please!)

QUIDS OUT

Dear MEGA MOUTH,
I would like to congratulate you on one helluva good mag, I like it so much, partly because the carts I've got feature in your Top 100, which shows you've got good taste: *John Madden '92* (1), *Sonic* (3), *Streets of Rage* (6) and *Chuck Rock* (52). Please don't print any letters like "just be happy with your console", which is getting boring in other mags. WE ALREADY ARE!

Well, really I wrote to ask why British Mega Drive owners pay much more than our American and Japanese counterparts. I can't think of any good answer, and even Nintendo do the same. We have only just got bargain games, which are all pathetic except *Super Hang On*. Mega Drives cost a measly £55 in America. OK, so it's only the hardware, but it's still outrageous compared to European prices. Wouldn't it be good if Britain was used in the price war? Can you shed any light on any developments?

PS. An Amiga mag has just printed a preview of *Chuck Rock 2*, using Chuck Rock Junior as the main sprite. Is there any chance of it being transferred to the Mega Drive in the near future?
David Frew, Lancashire

Dear David,
Everything is cheaper in the USA – CD's cost $12, Levi's 501s cost $35 and Ray Ban sunglasses sell for $45. So, compared to other goods, video games are no cheaper in the States than in the UK. It's just that when the games are imported, the price differences between the two countries as a whole is shown up.

But, if Sega USA can afford to sell carts cheaper, then Sega Europe could easily cut prices, but no – they'll charge as much as they can. That's business. ***Neil***

NOB 100?

Dear all at MEGA,
Thank-you for publishing what I consider to be the most refreshingly different Mega Drive magazine to appear in our newsagents. This is the first magazine I have read from cover to cover which hasn't sent me to sleep, as it gives the reader lots of comically different things to read.

One problem, though, is the Top 100. It is good and well thought out, but really totally NOB. What gamers need is a rating on the game so they can make their own minds up whether to buy it or not.

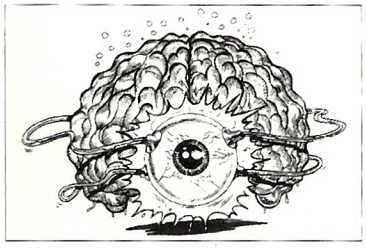
That's all for now, keep giving us more of the same, and believe me, you won't go far wrong.

PS. Now that I buy MEGA, your sister mag Sega Power is as much use as a handbrake on a canoe.
Mr G T Blanks, Chichester

Dear GT,
NOB? NOB? Whaddya mean NOB? Still you're entitled to your opinion (even if it is veering alarmingly wide of the mark). We like it, so it stays. We are, however, always open to ideas, so if enough people write in with this same complaint of Nobness, we'll drop it (possibly). ***Neil***

MIGHTY BRAIN

Dear MEGA,
Bloody hell, your name definitely says it all, what with 14, yes 14, excellent competitions in one issue (count 'em). MEGA is undoubtedly the superbest, coolest, wickedest, acest, skillest, brilliantest, greatest, awsomest, most excellent magazine for Mega Drive owners to date. I was unable to ring the MEGA team hot line as I was out, so I shall tell you what I think of you in writing.



There he is look, the Mighty Brain. The Almighty Git more like. Let's face it, he doesn't actually exist

The Top 100 games is a great idea, it helps me choose what to buy and what not to. The tips are also superb – God knows how you find them, but keep it up. The news is excellent and so are the previews and reviews, I mean SIX pages of *NHLPA Hockey* shows how dedicated you are to informing us of how it plays. The Qs in the news is excellent (I got 19 out of 20, *Hellfire* got me, I thought it was *Heavy Nova*! Oops), and I do hope this will be a regular feature in the mag. I also like the amount of humour in the mag, which makes it more interesting to read. In fact, everything is BRILLIANT!

Now I have a few questions to ask your superior brains.

1) I have always bought Future Publishing magazines starting with Commodore Format issue one, and I was wondering if maybe you could ahem, erm, borrow the Mighty Brain from Commodore Format and put it into MEGA or just put it in both mags?

2) Do you think *Chaos Engine* will be converted onto the Mega Drive or Mega CD?

3) Do you have to have a Mega CD to play *Prince of Persia* on the Mega Drive?

4) My local video store rent Mega Drive games and they have had *Predator 2*, *Greendog*, *Aquatics*, *Smash TV* and *Atomic Runner* way before most other stores, and quite often before the mags have even previewed them! Why is this?

5) Is there any chance of you sending a couple of games out to readers each month, so their reviews can appear beside yours in the subsequent issue?

Yours "proud to be a Mega Drive owner now that MEGA is here".
Simon Bullock, Staffordshire

Dear Simon,
1) Sadly the Mighty Brain is a law unto himself and cannot just be borrowed. He comes from a dimensio... NO! It's no good, I can't perpetuate this lie any longer. It's all very well to deceive poor Commodore 64 owners, but it's time you were told, Simon. The Mighty Brain doesn't exist, in much the same way as Father Christmas was a sham. MB is just an ink drawing cunningly conceived by the Commodore Format team so that they'd never be short of a witty reply to a letter. Sorry.

2) It's very possible that Chaos Engine *is being worked on as we speak, but that's just pure speculation on our part. As soon as we have definite details about it, we'll let you know.*

3) At the moment, the answer is yes. The only version of Prince of Persia *is on the Mega CD. Quite why it's not being done on cartridge is beyond us. Who knows, perhaps one is being worked on right now?*

4) In some cases, these games come out on grey import long before they appear officially. This means that video stores are able to get hold of them just as early as the mags can, and because of the lag time between us getting the games and getting the mag out, it's quite possible for them to be available for rental at least a month

Dear Sir,
Could I just ask one question?

When this seems to be the first issue of the magazine as stated, where do all the letters come from and the questions about sticky situations?

How do people know to write to you if, prior to this edition, your mag was non-existent?

I'm always flummoxed that a first edition of any mag has all this material.

Please put me out of my misery.
Mrs Irene Ferguson

Oh dearest Irene,
You've not been paying attention, have you? If you'd read the letters page in issue one more carefully, you'd have realised that any letters in there were quite clearly made up by ourselves to illustrate certain points. Like the MEGA MORON (that's you that is) and "questions people ask that we'd really rather they didn't".

Since you've been so spectacularly unobservant, you are this month's MEGA MORON and you get a prize. It seems only fitting then that you should receive a pair of spectacles with no lenses. Goodbye. Neil

PARENTAL GUIDANCE

Dear MEGA,

Please, please, please, please, please, please, please, please, please could you do a mega sized review (at least four pages long) crammed full of tips and info on *Desert Strike*. There is a reason behind it – I love the game and my Mum needs convincing that *Desert Strike* really is a great game.

Please could you put it in an issue before Christmas (for obvious reasons)? If not, can it be before April 'cos that's when my Birthday is? by the way, our mag's great.

Matt Broughton, West Sussex

Dear Matt,

To be honest, we'd rather devote the space in the mag to new releases each month. But why not first show your mother our Top 100 and say something like, "Look here you old crone, Desert Strike *is right near the top". And if that doesn't work, get her to read the following:*

"OY, Mrs Broughton. Your son knows what he's on about. Desert Strike's *fab and any parent who doesn't buy their son a copy is frankly deserving of all the world's ills and torments. (Psst! More importantly, if you do buy it, it'll keep the whingeing little git quiet for months. You'd be daft not to.)* Neil

Oh, I almost overlooked the fact that this is the star letter – so the cart's in the post, Matt.

The more romantic side of war, the medal ceremony – quite unlike the mass burials

before they appear in the mags.

5) Er, it's an idea, but as you can probably see, the mags pretty packed as it is, and we figure you'd rather see games fully reviewed and rated by us than a mish-mash of (possibly differing) readers' opinions. That's not to say you aren't free to give us your opinions on games via MEGA MOUTH each month. So, if any of you disagree with our ratings or simply wish to add your comments to ours, do write in. ***Neil***

CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM

Dear MEGA MOUTH,

I bought MEGA without realising it was new, and I am now fully converted, mainly because of the quality of the reviews, not least *NHLPA Hockey*. Enough of this though, I'm sure your post bag has been full of such praise.

It is more than clear that if you believe Sega owners are being ripped off, you will say so (as in your Crap 10, and the *Smash TV review*). If I have one complaint, however, it is your occasional fence-sitting and refusal to judge.

"THEN AGAIN..." is a hip, cool and Froogie idea, but rather than simply offering the options (as in your *Hardball* review) would not a decision as to "the one to splash out £40 on" be invaluable? Well, it would be to me at least? The main reason for my subscription is for a clear guide to the good, the bad, and the ugly (no dig at your good selves intended).

Your Top 100 suffered similarly. If it was intended as simply a way to begin debate, argument and even violence, then it succeeds brilliantly, but it would be more helpful to selective buyers if it included percentage ratings. I would even suggest that a Top 100 is in itself unhelpful as the suggestion is that these are the only games which you consider to be good. Yet, if we might look at your comment on *Bonanza Bros* (83), "Limited two-player fun and don't attempt a one-player game", I feel a top 50 would have been an improvement. Or even better, why not reveal your top three games of each genre?

My final little whinge (promise) is that the reviews would benefit from a counter opinion from a second reviewer, if not in full then at least a "gut reaction" to a game (this could help set the addiction rating).

Thanks for listening, and I would appreciate it if you could correct any spelling mistakes, as I'm at university and it could cause serious embarrassment, if not to me, then to the History Department.

Paul Randell, Newcastle

Dear Paul,

Where necessary, we do say whether an alternative game is a better buy (in the THEN AGAIN... box). Sometimes, though, we're purely offering a worthwhile, if not more valuable alternative. If a game is crap, we'll say "buy this one instead". When a game of a certain type has lots of alternatives, we'll say "fans of this sort of thing could try these others". And, like in the Hardball *review, if everything is much of a muchness and you're not likely to buy more than one game of that type, we'll say so.*

The Top 100 is a very tricky beast indeed. Adding percentage ratings would complicate things even further – we'd be forever getting letters from people whingeing about 1% inaccuracies and it would all get terribly embarrassing (not to mention pointless).

Hang on though, actually there is a very good reason why the games in order aren't given percentage marks (Good luck Neil, this should be interesting – Andy) and here it is: a game may be better than another, but not up to the standard of many other games in the genre. So, for example, Blockout *is placed above* Joe Montana 2 *in the top 100, even though we'd probably say that (if they were the only two games in existence)* Joe Montana *was the better game. It's just that* John Madden Football *is such a similar game and so much better that it severely reduces* Joe Montana's *appeal as a game you must have – and that's what the Top 100 is designed to tell you – so its position is dropped.*

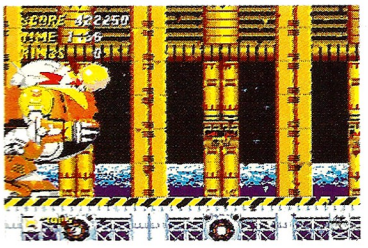
The way to treat the Top 100 is as an approximate guide to the best software out there. You can be sure that the top 30 of those are well worth getting. As you get further down the list, the games gradually get less enthralling. Yes, we could simply do a Top 50, but there are an awful lot of games out there which new Mega Drive owners will never have heard of. We owe it to them to at least give them a glimpse of as many games as possible.

And finally, when a game arrives in the office, we all tend to have a bash and come to a joint decision as to its merits. Occasionally, however, there are aspects of a game which one of us will particularly like, and it is then that we include a second opinion box. If we all commented on all the games (as other mags do), we feel it would cloud the issue. Reviews are there to help you decide which games to buy, so if you had several differing opinions appearing, you wouldn't know what to do. Better to give one specific opinion (formed by much debate) and then, when necessary, highlight any points that deserve a mention. ***Neil***

SCABBY SCREEN SHOTS

Dear MEGA,

Congratulations on an excellent first issue. The magazine already comes across as a worthy addition to the well-saturated Sega publications market, but not without a significant flaw. I am, of course, talking about the screenshots. In my opinion, if you really want to get ahead of the competition, the screenshots have to be proper photos.



Now we have our new grabbing system sorted, all our shots will be this good... (Oh, less yellow perhaps)

Let's face it, the scanned reproductions in your mag really don't do the Mega Drive any justice at all. In fact, I've almost been put off buying carts after seeing similar screenshots, but I have then seen the game working or better represented in other titles and been truly amazed at the beauty and detail of them.

For example, take a look at your review of *Thunderforce 4* (issue one), then look at the review of the same game in Mean Machines. While your review gives a detailed, fair impression of the game and comments on the "exquisite graphics", it's the other mag's pictures which demonstrate the fact, making you want to check out the cart.

Unfortunately, this goes for virtually all reviews in all the publications I've seen. Now that the SNES is about, the Mega Drive has serious competition and some of the artwork on the Nintendo is truly

Turn over

CONSEQUENCES

KEEP SENDING IN YOUR TWADDLE

After exhaustive research and study by the MEGA team, it has been discovered that an astonishing nine out of ten people are completely around the twist. At first this figure seemed unnaturally high, but then we decided to take a look at the quality of our average reader's letter, and realised that, in fact, it's not that surprising at all. It's official, you're all utterly mad, and none more so than *Paul Brazier* from Liverpool who sent in this month's chapter of consequences. If this is what goes on inside the head of your average bloke, then God help us all. Take it away Paul, you rather ridiculous fellow, you.

ZZZZZOOOOM!

"Just look at him go," yelled Andy, "he must be doing at least 45 mph now. What do you reckon Amanda?"

"I don't know about that, but I can tell you he hasn't moved that fast since Neil put that drawing pin on his chair!"

Paul, who by this time was sweating like a rhino with a woolly jumper on in the summer (I don't think they're related), fell flat on his face. His right leg came off and nuts and bolts clattered to the floor from his left foot.

"I've always said he had a screw loose," said Amanda, who by this time was finding it all quite amusing.

"No, he's always been this nuts," said Andy, who was beginning to get the hang of it.

Auntie coughed, "AHEM, AHEM... So zen, vere are dese tomatoes you vant picking, eh?"

"Did you originate from Scotland by any chance?" pondered Andy. Neil gave him a quick kick in the shins.

"Come on Aunt, I'll show you."

Everyone followed him outside. They all stood (except Paul who remained on the floor) and gasped.

"Erm... Neil," said Amanda, "why have all our tomato plants turned into strawberry plants?"

"Excuse me for butting in," said Andy sarcastically, "but who put that lighthouse in the middle of our back garden?"

Is Paul really CP3O or R2D2 covered in skin?

Who stole the tomatoes and replaced them with strawberries?

And, how much rent should they charge the lighthouse keeper?

Mmm... thank you for that, erm, "interesting" little anecdote Mr Brazier. For being such an incredibly random chap, you win a year's subscription to MEGA. (Poor bloke, 12 more months worth of this drivel.) If anyone else out there would like a free subscription to MEGA (you could use 'em to stop that old dining table wobbling or use them as draught excluders), get writing your consequences and send them to: Yet More Consequences, MEGA, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW.

Remember, this thing will only work if your submissions are completely and utterly devoid of any sense whatsoever. Make your chucklesome chapters around 200 words long and, er, that's it basically.

LETTERS

stunning. Right or wrong, it's nearly always the graphics which sell a system and its games.

Having said that, I will not be deserting my Mega Drive. Of the big corporations, I think that Sega is definitely the Coca Cola of the two! You only have to walk through any big seaside amusement arcade to know that it is Sega and their main suppliers which dominate the field, and there are some great conversions for us to look forward to.

As regards the future, I hope the Mega CD will eventually fulfil its promises, and the prospect of a 32 Mbit Mega Drive is almost too exciting.

Back to the magazine. I think that the celebrity interviews will only work if the interviewees are already Sega fans, thus being able to give much more interesting views. Maybe you could start with Pat Sharpe, as you mentioned that he was a *Blockout* fan, or better still Cathy Dennis, another confirmed addict.

Another feature I would like to see is a history of video games. You could trace the origins of games and comment on how they've developed into the brain bashers we've come to know and love. Some of the early games like *Williams' Defender* and *Robotron 2004*, *Atari Tempest* and *Star Wars* will never be bettered, and they all have contemporary versions. And, does anyone remember *Tail Gunner*? I'll never forget the amount of ten pences the Blackpool South Pier machine sucked from my pocket!

I'm sure such an article would elevate MEGA from being aimed at purely Mega Drive owners to one for video game freaks in general.

Anyway, I think that's enough for now, so I'll say ciao and hope that this letter gets the puck sliding!

Chris Lockley, Notts

Dear Chris

The system we use for screenshots isn't a scanning system. It is, in fact, a video grabbing system. What the hell is that then? Well, it's a box of tricks that connects to our Macintosh computers enabling us to feed the signal from the Mega Drive straight into the computer and digitally "grab" and store it in real time. It's dead clever, but also kind of tricky to get perfect at first. We don't think our screenshots are dreadful, but there is definitely room for improvement. Over the next couple of months you'll be seeing a big improvement in our visuals as we get more expert with the system and start "cleaning up" the grabs. Bear with us.

As for the interviews, your comments have been noted. Although we agree that a strictly Sega related celeb is preferable, we also feel that it's fun to get a bloke, or blokess, who hasn't got a bloody clue how to play the games and see how he/she fares. I dunno, perhaps the other readers would like to give us their views on this?

History of video games eh? Well we've got the history of Sega this month, but that's not quite what you're after, is it? It's an interesting idea, though, and might be worth a bit of space in the future. Again, why don't you all write in with your ideas? Instead of us sitting here twiddling our thumbs thinking, "Mmm, what on earth will they want to read about this month?", you could tell us exactly what you want. ***Neil***

A STUNNER!

Dear MEGA MOUTH,

After seeing *EA Hockey* in your mag last month, I dashed down to my local shop, and I couldn't believe what I saw. What an absolute classic! Instantly playable, stunning to look at, amazing sounds, great use of colour, a real teaser – definitely ten out of ten, and her sister wasn't bad either! Ha Ha! I'll let you know what the gameplay is like. Forget computer games.

Waz (not Was), East Sussex

Dear Waz,

You are indeed a bloke who knows where it's at. As much as we all love Sega games, there are other things to life – namely beer, cigarettes and women. Yes, we're all nineties men and we do think of women as our equals and we are aware of the health risks involved in all avenues of life, but heck, at the end of the day, we're red-blooded males. Well except Amanda.

Would you like to say a few words on the subject Amanda? Oh dear, she's on holiday. Never mind. Send all your letters of complaint to SEXIST PIGS, US? at the usual address.

(Ahem, I'd just like to point out that Dyer sneaked in that last reply – ***Neil****)*

KICK OFF ABOUT TO, ERM, KICK OFF

Dear MEGA,

I was wondering if your more intellectual view and wider knowledge of the scene would be able to provide the answers to some questions that I have about Mega Drive *Kick Off*.

Wow, *Kick Off* on the Mega Drive. Er, not quite. It's the Master System version, but it illustrates the point

Due to the immense time taken to convert this masterpiece to Sega's masterpiece, I was wondering if it would emerge as "a whole new ball game"? Will a league option be incorporated, which involves the random Chairman's wallet factor – deciding the title destination?

Will there be an option, as in real football, where the dangly, stringy bits or psychedelic designs of kits are actually more important than the football?

But more importantly, halfway through a season, will points suddenly be deducted from some teams due to the sad financial demise of one of the "minnows" in the league?

PS. Can we have some half-time fireworks too, and can we have an option to widen the goals and play four quarters in time for the US World Cup?

Roger Winstanley, Lancs.

Dear Roger,

Blimey you're a bit amusing in a topical sort of way, aren't you? Unfortunately we're still not entirely sure when Kick Off *will be released, or what new features it will have. Although it will have a "teach Gary Lineker Japanese and watch him sod off to a wealthy foreign team" mode incorporated in it.* ***Neil***

DAMN, WE'VE BEEN RUMBLED

Dear MEGA,

This is the best Mega Drive mag I've read, It's answered all the Mega Drive questions I wanted to know, except a few which I hope you can answer now.

1) Why have you done Master System Graphics of *Smash TV?* (See the review on page 57 of issue one.) Is it really that bad that you don't want to print Mega Drive screenshots?

2) Could *Sonic 2* have handled over 90 levels, like the Puker Nintendo's *Super Mario World*?

3) What do you do if you're in love with a girl, but she's not in love with you?

4) How long did it take you to compile the Top 100?

5) Is *John Madden Football '92* complicated, because of its American football rules?

6) Is there a DEFINITE price for the Mega CD yet?

7) Will the Mega CD take over from the Mega Drive?

8) Finally, why don't you get teenagers to review games? You lot are experienced, so your reviews may say a game's too easy, when it really isn't.

PS. Why doesn't your *Streets of Rage* bad ending sequence work though? I spent almost three hours trying it with my friend.

Daniel "cartridge slot" Ranger, Luton

Dear Daniel,

1) Being that observant won't win you any friends, you know. But yes, you've tumbled our gaff and rumbled our plot. The excuse goes thus: we were reviewing the game downstairs in the office of our sister mag Sega Power (who cover Mega Drive, Master System and Game Gear games), because our Mega Drives were already being used.

We played the game, did the screen grabs and then stored them on Sega Power's Macintosh computer. When, at a later date, someone went back to retrieve the grabs, the pillock took the wrong file, so we ended up with Master System grabs rather than Mega Drive ones. Stupid? Yes. Unavoidable? Not really.

2) Er, dunno, but with the high graphical content in Sonic 2*, a 90-level extravaganza would have probably only just fitted on a six-foot square cartridge costing more than your average semi-detached house.*

3) Have a quiet blub to yourself, get yourself a "don't give a toss" attitude, go through a series of shallow and unfulfilling encounters with shabby members of the opposite sex, wake up one morning and think, "Christ, what a berk I've been", find a fabulous women who's everything you ever asked for, suddenly realise you're infatuated and she doesn't really give a damn, then start again from the blubbing part.

4)Ten minutes or so. No, too long actually. Oh, I can't remember.

5) Not if you take the time to read the manual properly. Although if, like most people, you just want to dive straight in, you're doomed.

6) Not yet, but we'll let you know

7) No again. It's an add on, not a replacement. And it'll be a loooong time before more people have Mega CDs than Mega Drives, so don't worry. Cart-based games will be dominant for yonks yet.

8) For much the same reason as we don't let OAPs do it, or anyone else for that matter. We're sure many of you would be fab, but basically we've got all the people we need. As for us being experts, the truth is, because we work with games all the time, we get a feel for them, but we're by no means gods. And besides, when we say a games too easy, it is too easy. If we finish it in a day we'll either say so, or say something like "it'll take you three days at most". The thing is, whether it takes you a day, three days or two weeks, it's still not much cop when you're paying forty quid for it. ***Neil***

EXCERPTS FROM THE DIARY OF A STUNT MEGA DRIVE

It's happened. Against all the odds, someone's actually been stupid enough to send us a shot of their very own stunt Mega Drive.

This one has decided to make like Houdini and bind and gag itself, place itself in a box then try to escape before it drowns after being placed in a bath tub full of water. For taking the time to set up this ludicrous shot, *Daren Chandisingh* of Lancaster gets a free cart. Keep sending your strange photos to Stunt Mega Drive, MEGA, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW.

The Houdini Drive – Bloody mad!

THE WRITE THING...

... to do is to jot a few lines to: MEGA MOUTH, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA2 2BW, or fax us on 0225 446019.

THE CURIOUS LETTERS OF HAROLD BLOXHAM

HEAVENS! Harold's hit the jackpot. After months of trying, he's finally found a celebrity who agrees with him. We could say that Nanette Newman is a few plates short of a dinner service, but we won't, because she's entitled to her opinion, and a certain member of the MEGA team fancies her. (Dream on Neil – Andy)

Harold S. Bloxham
Beauford Court
30 Monmouth Street
Bath
BA1 2BW

8th July 1992

Dear Mr Milligan,

I am writing to express my extreme concern about the 'craze' of 'video-games' that is currently sweeping the nation's youth. It is a trend I find both sinister and disturbing.

These so-called 'home consoles' are eroding the brains of our future leaders. I am reliably informed that youths spend hour upon hour staring aimlessly into their TV screens hell bent on destroying aliens, foreigners and all manner of outlandish and fictitious life-forms.

In my day, children were taught to respect life in all its miraculous diversity. I'm quite sure that you didn't get to where you are today sitting inside destroying killer-blobs from the evil planet Zab.

As a successful business man (and a prominent TV 'personality'), and hence an influence on our nation's youth, I would be very interested to hear your views on this perverse exploitation of our children, and what action you intend taking.I would appreciate a speedy reply.

Yours sincerely,

Harold S. Bloxham

Mr. Harold Bloxham (Retired)

P.S. Any chance of a signed photo of you as I'm a big fan of your manic humour

Spike Milligan

Harold S Bloxham Esq
Beauford Court
30 Monmouth Street
Bath
BA1 2BW

October 12th 1992

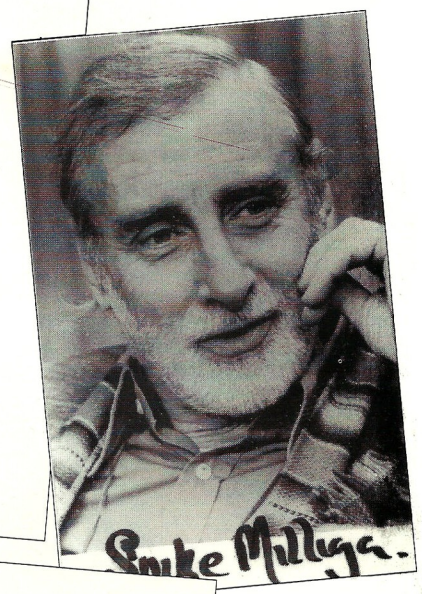
Dear Harold,

Please do forgive the delay in replying to your letter I have been away from my office and am absolutely inundated at the moment. I am enclosing herewith the signed photograph you wanted. I am sorry I cannot write at length but as I say I am inundated. I do hope you understand.

Sincerely,

Spike

SPIKE MILLIGAN



Nanette Newman

Harold Bloxham, Esq.,
Beauford Court,
30 Monmouth Street,
Bath,
BA1 2BW.

13th July 1992

Dear Mr Bloxham,

In reply to your letter, I think you are right to be concerned about the craze of video games which, as you say, is sweeping the nation.

I believe there are schools in England who have asked parents to limit the amount of time their children spend playing these games because they feel that it is affecting their school work. However, I really think that in the final analysis the only action that one can take is not to buy them if one feels very strongly about their bad influence. If the companies who manufacture them found that sales were not all that they had hoped for, they would soon drop out of the market. Unfortunately, as with all 'new' games, they all seem to have a desirability for the young, and I am sure that parents are often forced into the position of buying something that they probably feel is not ideal for their child. Sadly, I think there is very little that one can do, other than hope that parents will take responsibility for not allowing their children to obtain them. As a father yourself, I am sure you will realise that this would be a very difficult task, and once these games are on the market and available to the public then it is too late for anything to be done, other than to voice one's disapproval. Perhaps it is a 'fad' that will burn itself out, and maybe the children who are so passionate about the games will become bored and move on to something else. We live in a computer age and I guess that there will be many more inventions to come where people will be out to make a lot of money rather than thinking of what they are actually doing to the brains of the children who are swept up in the excitement of something new.

You end your letter by asking what action I intend taking. Sadly, I am not in a position of influence, even though I am, as you say, a TV personality. I think you would need to write to someone in a much more exalted position then me, or perhaps bombard the newspapers with your protests, which you put down in such an excellent way in the letter you sent to me.

As you requested, I am sending you a signed photograph for your grandson, and let's hope that he is video game-free.

Yours sincerely,

Nanette Newman

Nanette Newman

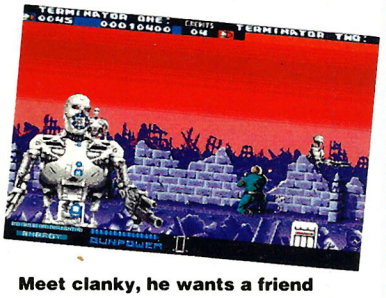
SHUT DOWN

So there you go beloved readers, another hundred or so pages of cobbled together rubbish. Let's just pluck a few things from thin air to put into the next issue

While you reach the end of the mag and shed a tear at the prospect of waiting a month for the next one, we reach the end and whoop with joy. Strange indeed!

TERMINATOR 2

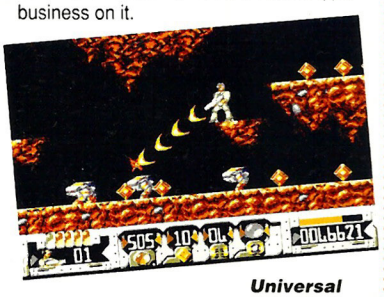
Not only will we be reviewing this coin-op conversion next month, we'll also let you know how well Sega's new light gun (The Menacer) works with it. It looks like being quite a frantic blast, so stay tuned.



Meet clanky, he wants a friend

UNIVERSAL SOLDIER

The only thing this game has in common with the film is the name. Yes, this is, in fact, *Turrican 2* with the graphics changed. Slightly curious, but if the game turns out fab, then who cares. Find out where it's at next month when we'll do the review-type business on it.



***Universal Soldier? Turrican 2.5* perhaps?**

ROAD RASH 2

We are still looking forward to high-horse-powered violence in the sequel to *Road Rash*. Can't wait

The follow up to EA's spectacular (and mildly violent) motorcycle racing game is almost upon us. This time around, it'll include a split-screen simultaneous two-player game. From what we've seen so far, it should definitely be one to look out for, so you'll be glad to know that we'll have the full review next monthish.

AND MORE...

We'll also be reviewing official releases like *G-Loc*, *André Agassi Tennis*, and *Tale Spin* plus import games like, um, well *The Chicki Chicki Boys*, *Jerry Glanville's Pigskin Football* and *Keeper Of The Gates*. And, lest we should forget, how about a smattering of Mega CD stuff? Yes? All right then, we'll try to get hold of *Afterburner 3*, *Time Gal* and *Ramna 3*. That's not bad, but there'll also be all the usual previews, tips and features for you to get your teeth into. See you next time.

TIPS
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Every code, for every level in
ISSUE 4
out on THURSDAY 17 DECEMBER

THE As ON THE BACK PAGE

If you haven't already read page 11, go and do it now, because these are the answer to the Qs in the News, which reside there. You don't win anything, you just get to sit back safe in the knowledge that you're fab when it comes to knowing your Sega stuff.

1. b) Difficult to control, boisterous
2. Brutal Deluxe
3. 10,000
4. Six
5. Death Adder
6. Five
7. *Wings Of War*
8. Andy Crane
9. July '91
10. Christopher Walken
11. Pat-a-cake, it's a crap school game and the others are beat-'em-ups
12. Danny (Lard Boy) Curley
13. McDonalds
14. Menacer
15. Two
16. Mat Groening
17. *Lotus Turbo Challenge*
18. *Batman Returns*
19. *World Class Leaderboard*
20. *World Of Illusion*

1 – 8 points: Thee baint none too clevur be 'ee moi deer. No, oi reckon you be a bit of a village idiot.

9 – 14 points: Hmm... slightly better. We think you're probably a school dunce-type of person. Yes.

15 – 17: You're a bit cocky, aren't you? Yeah, yeah you may have a fairly sound knowledge of Sega stuff, but don't get carried away (smarmy git).

18 – 20: Gulp!

MEGA TV STARDOM COMPETITION

WIN!

Those prizes so far: a Skull and Crossbones coin-op from Domark, signed photographs of Saint and Greavsie, and this month's prize is an American football autographed by John Madden from those nice folk at Electronic Arts. So how do you win them?

All you have to do is get yourself on television, holding a copy of MEGA. Then, video it and send us the tape. Make sure you tape enough of the programme, so that we can tell it's not faked. But please, please, please be careful. If you do anything even remotely illegal, we will personally come round to your prison cell and blow raspberries at you. Send your entries to "Well tie me to the bedpost and call me Doris if I haven't made my mag a star!" Compo, MEGA, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW. Closing date for this compo is June 13, 2033 ('cos we'll all be retired by then). People excluded from entering this compo are people who work for Future Publishing, their relatives and Trevor McDonald. (Come off it Trev, it'd be a doddle for you.)

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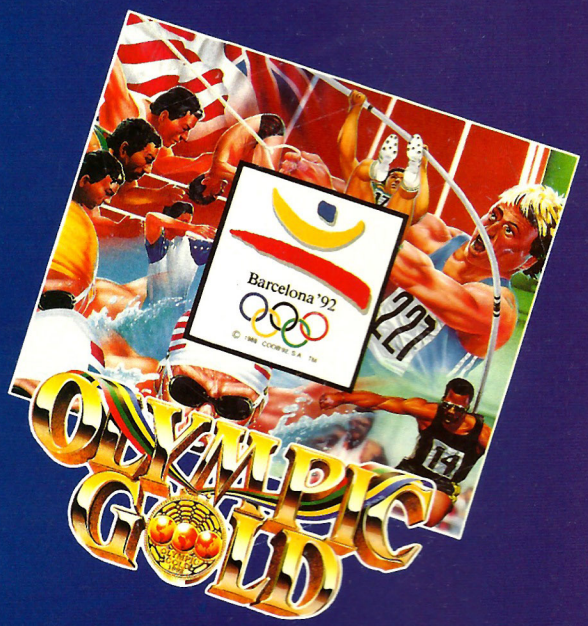

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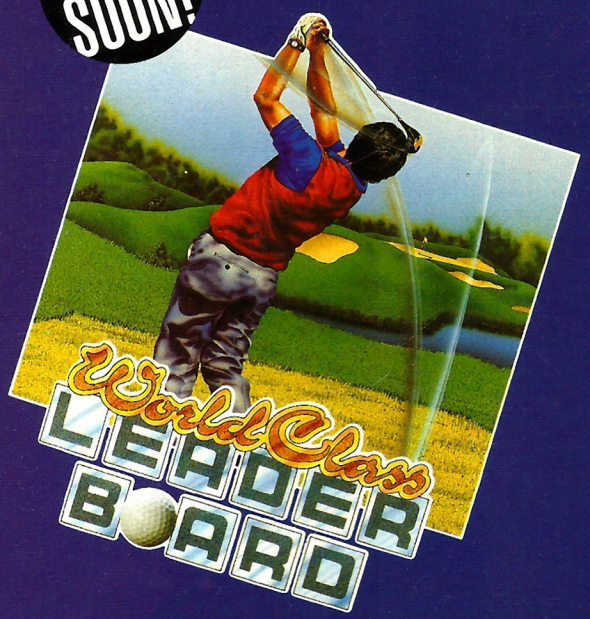

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