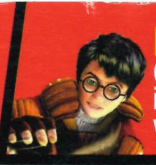


ADVANCE WARS 2
FULLY MAPPED SOLUTION!
Battle your way through the GBA's best game!



HARRY POTTER
Quidditch World Cup flies in for review! Find out why it's top of the class...

CASH-IN!
Shave £££s off your next GBA game!*

ADVANCE

THE **GAME BOY ADVANCE** MAGAZINE!

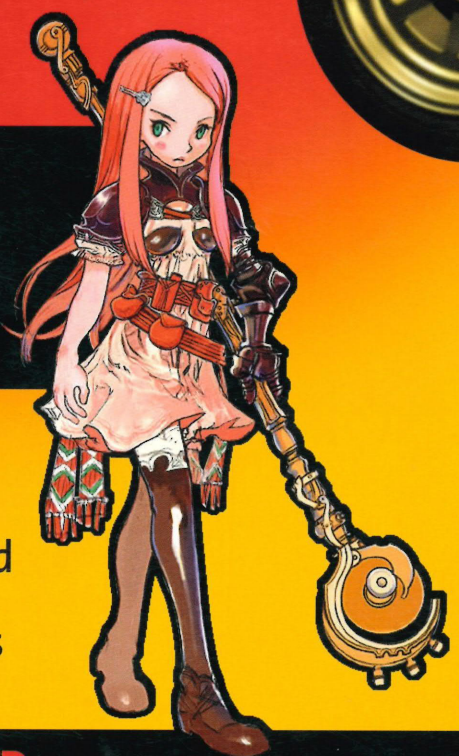
GO POKÉ-MENTAL!
PINBALL REVIEWED & NEW GAMES REVEALED!

MORE THAN **329** GBA GAMES RATED!



→ THE ULTIMATE REV-VIEW!

CRASH NITRO KART
WE ROAD TEST THE NEW KING OF KART RACING! IT'S A BLAST



→ IT'S HERE!

FINAL FANTASY
The game your GBA's been dreaming of!

→ FIRST PLAY!

BOKTAI
The sun-powered vampire game! From the makers of Metal Gear!

THE BIGGEST REVIEWS!
- → TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND
- → ONIMUSHA TACTICS ADVANCE
- → LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
- → FINAL FANTASY TACTICS
- → MEDAL OF HONOR
- → THE SIMS
- → BOKTAI



→ FIRST REVIEW!

SPYRO ADVENTURE
Is it hot or grot?

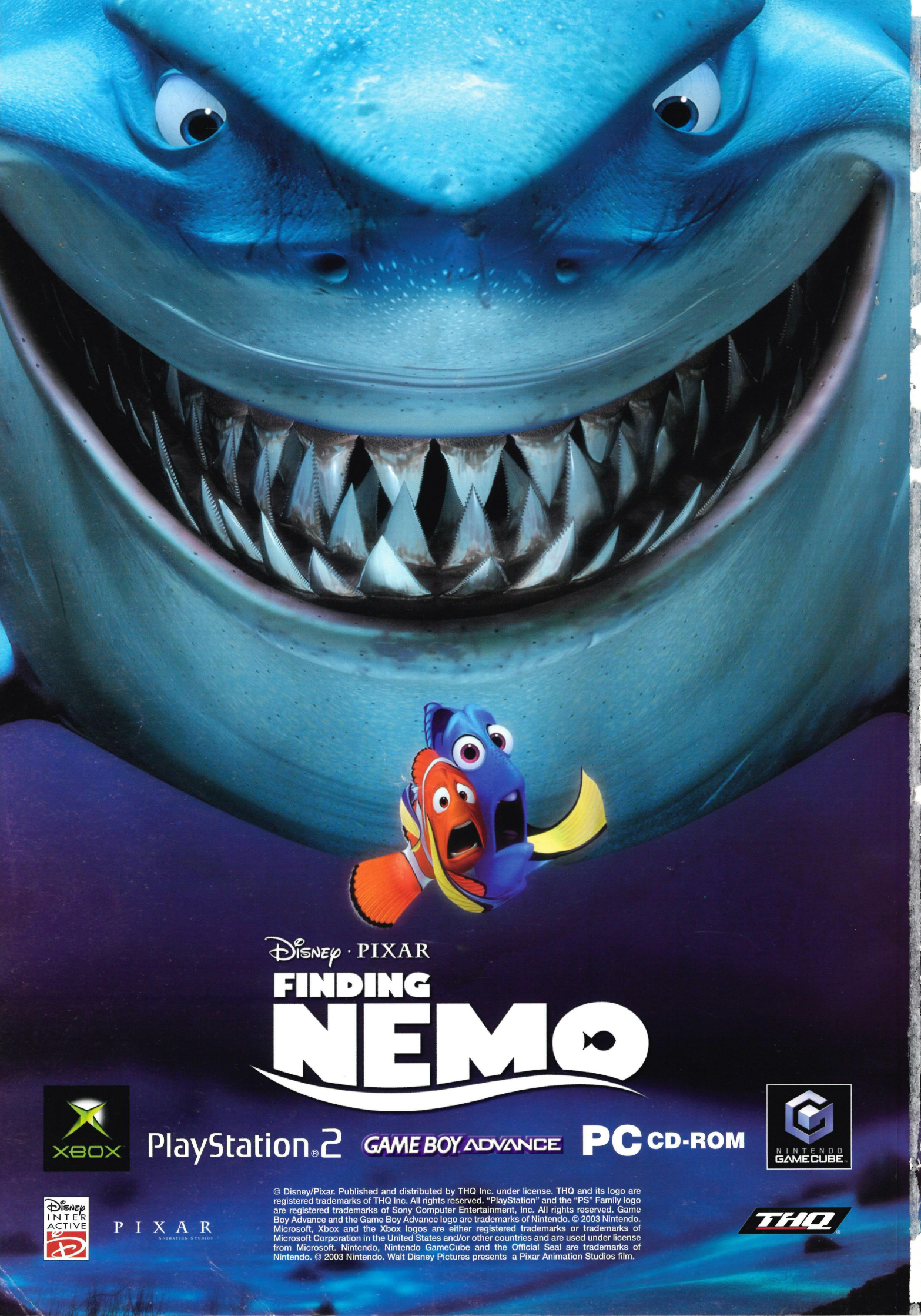
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→ POKEMON PINBALL → GOLDEN SUN 2
→ TIGER WOODS 2004 → SUPER MARIO 3
→ POP IDOL → & EVEN MORE!

*UK only. terms and conditions apply.

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CRASH NITRO KART ★ FINAL FANTASY TACTICS ★ SPYRO ADVENTURE ★ BOKTAI ★ MEDAL OF HONOR ★ LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING



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Printed in the UK by St Ives Roche
Distributed by Seymour Distribution, 86 Newman Street, London W1P 3LD. Tel: 020 7907 6000

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ANOTHER FUN-SPLATTERED ISSUE... DO EXCUSE THE MESS

So many great games have raced through ADVANCE towers this month, that we've barely had time to draw breath. Cranking up the office good-time-o-meter we've had the multiplayer marvel *Crash Nitro Kart*, the cistern-smashing *Mario Advance 4*, the spellbinding *Harry Potter Quidditch World Cup*, the purple amazement of *Spyro Adventure* and the flippin' mental *Sonic Pinball Party* going toe-to-toe with the Pokémon's *Pinball* effort. Add to that big budget blockbusters like *Lord Of The Rings: The Return Of The King* and the spiffing World War 2 blaster, *Medal Of Honor Infiltrator* and you have an uncommonly strong reviews line-up. Anyone would think it was Christmas.

Away from the Chrimbo gaming glitter, three new kings of strategy hit GBA town; *Final Fantasy Tactics Advance*, *Onimusha Tactics* and the, badly-named *Sim City 2000*. Then there's the quality RPG-age of *Golden Sun: The Lost Age*, and the sporting rivalries of *FIFA 2004*, *Archie Maclean's Pool* and *Tiger Woods 2004*. And we've got quirky too – the likes of *The Sims Bustin' Out*, *Scooby Doo! Mystery Mayhem* and *Pop Idol* are guaranteed to make your GBA pull a Christina Ricci-type face. And there's more! We've not yet mentioned the fully-mapped *Advance Wars 2* guide, the first review of the sun-powered vampire game, *Boktai*, the feature, the scoops, the terrific compos or, er, Joel's *Barbie Horse Adventure* review... Now that is something to dash for.

Scott Anthony
Editor



PAGE 36

CRASH NITRO KART

COVER GAME





PAGE 36

MIRROR, SIGNAL, MAYHEM!
CRASH NITRO KART

The bandicoot is back! Powerslide this way for an exclusive car-nucopia of Crash-related karting delights!

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FINAL FANTASY TACTICS
Advance Wars but with magic... and pubs!



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MOH INFILTRATOR
Storming WW2 shooter coming through...



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SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 4
Everybody jump! It's the GBA's best platformer!



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HARRY POTTER QWC
Quality Qudditch! With added ba-ba-broom!



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SPYRO ADVENTURE
The purple dragon scales new heights of mauve



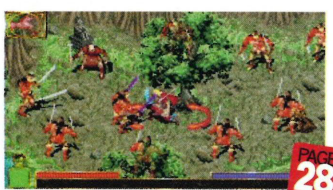
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BOKTAI: SUN IN YOUR HAND
Originality alert! A sun-powered vampire game!



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TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND
Skateboarding on the Victoria line, or something



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LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
A triumph? Or will Tolkein turn in his grave?



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December 2003

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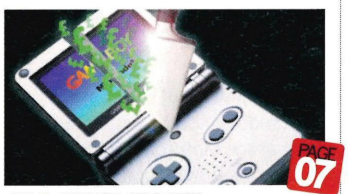
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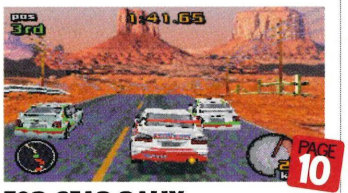
06 NEWS, WE CALL IT!
ADVANCE WARNING



POKÉMON RED/GREEN
New games from the pocket-sized GBA giants!



GBA PRICE SLASH!
Is the SP really destined for the bargain bins?



TOP GEAR RALLY
It's mega-precious 24 car-rot racing gold!



EVERYTHING OR NOTHING
All her majesty's 007 secrets serviced here!

PLUS!
A HAREM OF THE HIPPEST HANDHELD HOT-NEWS!



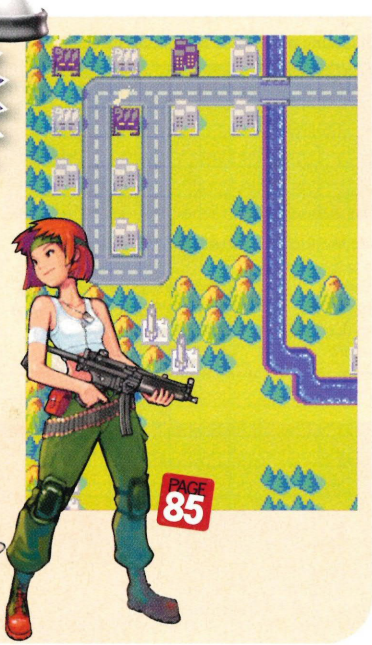
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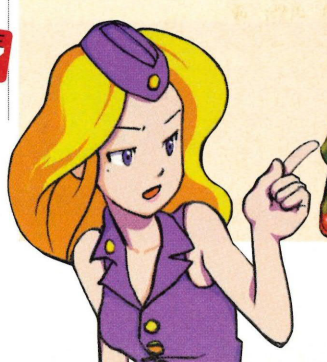
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Save yourself from *Advance Wars 2* insanity, use our guide to slay this strategy classic!



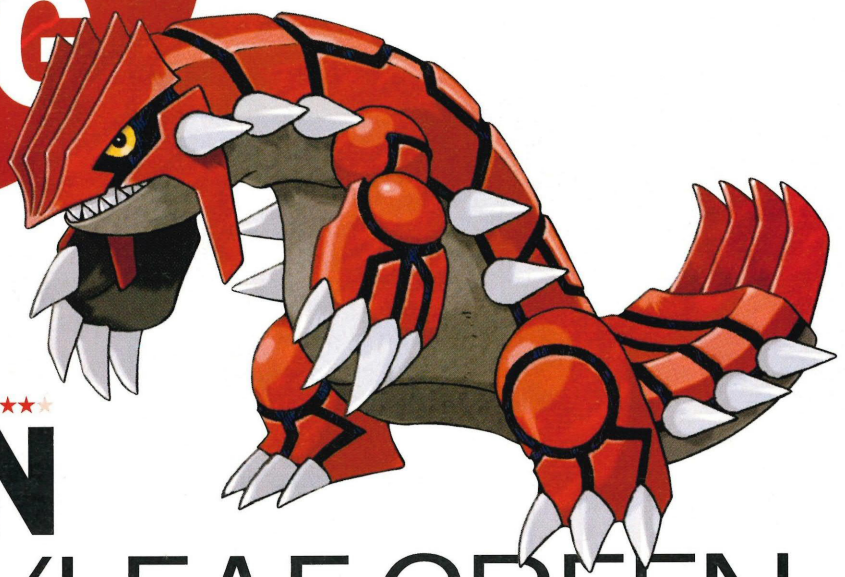
MAPPED SOLUTION!
ADVANCE WARS 2
Black Hole get a beating with our step-by-step battle plans! We shall tip this only once!





ADVANCE WARNING

We're on full Pokemon alert...



FROM: NINTENDO **OUT:** EASTER 2004 **ANTICIPATION:** ★★★★☆

POKEMON FIRE RED/LEAF GREEN

First there was the pokedex, then the pokenav and now... the poke-Motorola



The game world might be familiar but the success of *Fire Red/Leaf Green* rests on the wireless adaptor that it's bundled with...

Pokemon *Ruby/Sapphire* were the biggest-selling GBA games of this year, hence 2004 sees yet more of the pocket critters turned loose.

On first impressions *Pokemon Fire Red/Leaf Green* offer little for non-fans. Early reports suggested that *Fire Red/Leaf Green* were merely remakes of 1996s *Pokemon Red/Green* (*Green* became *Blue* in the West) GBC titles, with added shiny poke-knobs. ADVANCE has learned there is far more to it then that.

Most evolved of the reasons to be excited is that *Fire Red/Leaf Green* will come bundled with a wireless adaptor. The adaptor allows up to five GBA owners to play together without any connecting wires. Nintendo president, Satoru Iwata, revealed that the Motorola-developed device will be used 'to enhance head-to-head battles, exchange of information and communication with others.' The network technology will also be used to re-invigorate the otherwise near decade-old puzzles of *Red* and *Blue*.

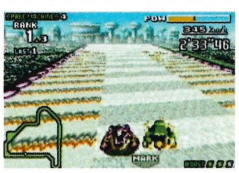


Bulbasaur's back and this time he's... Well, pretty much the same as last time, actually.

Throw in extra-Pokemon, an enlarged game world and connectivity with this year's 1.5 million-selling *Ruby/Sapphire* games (which are about to be re-released in a special Poke-branded SP pack – priced around £120) and *Pokemon Colosseum* on the GC and you have enough to sate even the most demanding RPG-head.

FLIPPIN' MENTAL!
POKÉMON PINBALL
Reviewed on page 56

FOUR FOR 2004 Next year sees the return of yet more Nintendo biggies...



F-ZERO: FALCON DENSETSU
Hot on the heels of the impressive GC racer comes the Sci-Fi sequel to *F-Zero: Maximum Velocity*. The future can't come quick enough.



METROID ZERO MISSION
Samus returns to the GBA to celebrate her China anniversary (that's 20th, nuptials fans) with quality-loving GBA gamers.



MARIO & DONKEY KONG
This GBA'd up version of the Game & Watch title should do for old skool DK what *Advance Wars* did for the hitherto obscure *GB Wars*.



MARIO & LUIGI
Paper Mario-esque adventure that puts you in control of both Mario and cousin Luigi for simultaneous puzzle fun. Due in shops December.

INCOMING

The great new stuff making a green-dotted appearance on ADVANCE's gaming radar.



MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE: OP. SURMA
■ Atari ■ December
The film's not due 'till 2005, but this team-based stealther cross between *Rainbow 6* and *Metal Gear* has already snaked on to the Christmas release schedule.
ANTICIPATION: ★★☆☆☆



HARVEST MOON: FRIENDS OF MINERAL TOWN
■ Ubisoft ■ February 2004
The non-GM farm management game that is, incredibly, not rubbish. Already a cult series, *Friends Of Mineral Town*, comes with added GC connectivity for extra fruitful gameplay delights.
ANTICIPATION: ★★★★☆

GBA PRICE SLASH!

Word on the street has it that the price of the SP is set to fall



Despite its incredible popularity, speculation is mounting that Nintendo may slash the price of the GBA SP. Nintendo have sold two million of the back-lit beauties in just six months and have just released their wonder console in two new colours – Arctic Blue and Flame Red – in time for Chrimbo, so why the rumours?

Well, although Nintendo's handheld has been a monstrous hit, their home console, Gamecube, languishes in third place behind Microsoft's Xbox and Sony's PlayStation2. Sales of the GC have been so poor that last month the Kyoto-based company reported a three billion yen (about £16 million) loss to the Japanese stock exchange.

Amazingly, this is the first loss Nintendo have ever reported, and prompted immediate action from the games giant. Nintendo snapped up a stake in toy giant (and *Digimon* creators) Bandai and cut the price of the Gamecube in the UK to just £79, £10 lower than the SP! When we pressed Nintendo on the unfairness of this, they claimed that the GC and GBA were 'different' entities and could not be compared. Hmm.

However, with Sony's first handheld console, the PSP, due for release in 2004, the high price seems as unsustainable as Nintendo's claim that handheld gamers don't see the SP's expense vis-à-vis the considerably more powerful GC as 'a problem.'

PUNTER'S PODIUM

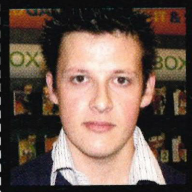
Is the price of the GBA SP 'a problem'?



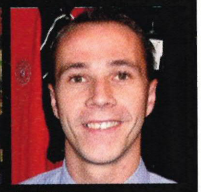
LAURA
■ 18 ■ Student
"I would never pay £90 for an SP"



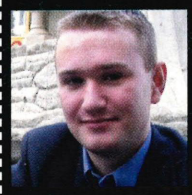
LUCY
■ 17 ■ College Luvvie
"The SP's at an average price"



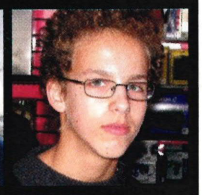
GIDEON
■ 25 ■ Shop Assistant
"Value would be putting the GC and SP together"



WAYNE
■ 24 ■ Manager
"£70 for the SP plus one game would be better"



JAMES
■ 23 ■ Assistant manager
"I got my SP cheaply second-hand so I couldn't care less"



ANTOINE (FRENCH)
■ 13, 14 ■ English exchange pupil
"The GBA SP is too expensive – it should come with a game"

FROM: EA **OUT:** DECEMBER **ANTICIPATION:** ★★★★

007 EVERYTHING OR NOTHING

James Bond gets a licence to drive

***Everything Or Nothing*, the new James Bond game, is to make its debut on the GBA this Christmas – some three months ahead of every other console.**

The news is all the more surprising because, like this issue's *Medal Of Honor Infiltrator*, EA have given their James Bond game engine a complete overhaul. Whereas Easter's *007 Nightfire*, was an fps of the okay-rather-than-outstanding variety, *Everything Or Nothing* takes a mostly isometric approach.

As well as shaking and stirring stealth, puzzling and fighting into JB's latest adventure – there are also driving sub-games, ensuring that there's plenty of gaming meat on the ancient licences bones. Not surprising really, as EA have just signed a big money deal that keeps Mr Bond in their pockets until 2010 and need to protect their superspy's good name.

Throw in your typically sumptuous locales – New Orleans, Peru, Moscow and Egypt and all that's missing is Halle Berry. Halle Berry, mmm.



Bond has returned... But it's only been 5 mins since *007 Nightfire*.



CUSTOM ROBO GX
■ Nintendo ■ July 2004
A hit on the N64, Nintendo's *Robot Wars* meets *Pokemon* meets *Transformers* strategy-title is finally coming to the GBA. Essentially, it's a matter of tooling up your robos, arming them up some more and then fighting. With guns.
ANTICIPATION: ★★★★



YOU'RE IN CONTROL
■ MIT ■ TBC
No, you're eyes do not deceive you. This is the world's first urinal-based, wee-powered videogame. The creation of MIT graduates, Dan Maynes-Aminzade and Hayes Solos Raffle, *YIC* is currently being sold to a chain of US restaurants.
ANTICIPATION: ★

The Simpsons™ Drive You CRAZY

The Simpsons™ ROAD RAGE™

MATT GROENING

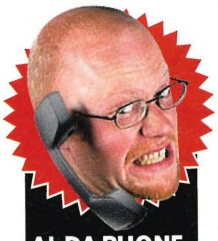


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AL DA PHONE
He rants down the blower. Don't ask why

'No 1: SHY NINTENDO'

A Nintendo game is an event to celebrate. So why have some titles been sneaked under the review radar? Take *Hamtaro: Ham Ham Heartbreak*, it's in shops now, but you wouldn't know. It's almost like they're embarrassed.

The curious little RPG-cum-adventure game won't be to everyone's taste, as it's cute beyond belief and really quite odd. The purpose of the game is to restore love to the Hamtaro hamster-world by talking to other hamsters (in Ham Chat), and getting them to love one another. You also get to buy them wigs.

Bizarre? Yes, but that doesn't stop it being a great little game. It'd certainly score well in ADVANCE, as we're fans of original ideas. So come on Nintendo, pull your finger out. We want to know more, and it's your job to tell us!

FROM: NINTENDO **OUT:** APRIL 2004 **ANTICIPATION:** ★★★★★

MARIO GOLF ADVANCE TOUR

Mario swaps dungarees for plus fours, the cad

Most beards want their RPGs served with a John Daly-sized serving of stats, wizards and other dull stuff. Few, other than super developers Camelot, (they behind the *Golden Sun* series) would be capable of mixing a hardcore RPG with, er, golf. But in the great Nintendo tradition of producing cutesy games with the cruellest of gaming hearts (that's you *Pokemon* and you at the back *Advance Wars*) that's exactly the premise behind *Mario Golf*.

Like GBC *Mario Golf* and *Mario Tennis* before it, *Mario Golf Advance* will see you (or one of Mario and his chums) working your way up the golfing order of merit while exploring a green and not too threatening land. Also familiar to N64/GBC owners will be the link-up mode, which sees *Advance Tour* work in tandem with GC cousin, *Mario Golf: Toadstool Tour*. However, with sub-quests a-plenty, a variety of weird on-the-spot competitions and pitch perfect arcade-style controls, this looks more appealing as a stand alone title. *Mario Golf* will be joining the more straight-laced *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004* on the tee early next year.

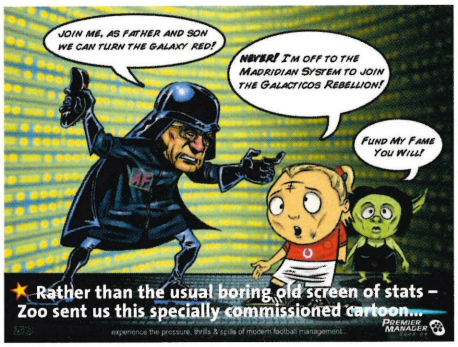


GOLFING GIMPS! **TIGER WOODS'** scorecard gets chalked on page **73**

FROM: ZOO **OUT:** DECEMBER **ANTICIPATION:** ★★★★☆

PREMIER MANAGER 2003/04

Advance scouts have spotted a devilishly good footie title



★ **Rather than the usual boring old screen of stats – Zoo sent us this specially commissioned cartoon...**

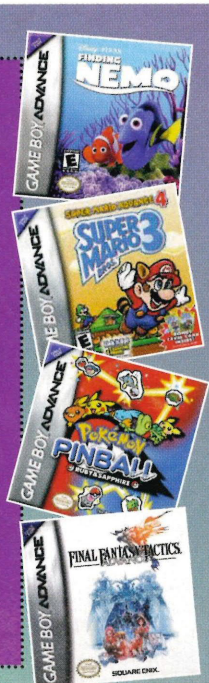
Like some console equivalent of Newcastle United, the GBA has been waiting for a top footie title for an age. Can the release of *Premier Manager 2003/4* bring football home?

Although, *Premier Manager 2003/4* offers only the heart-attack inducing side of the beautiful game, the view from the dugout is a good one – built on the Amiga classic of the same name.

Budding Fergie's will be able to manage any club from the top four British divisions, as well as clubs in the top two Spanish, Italian, French and German divisions, simultaneously! As well as more stats than Motty could mumble, *Premier Manager* has a neat coaching system that allows you to delegate various duties to backroom staff – making the game as simple or turnip-like as you choose it. We'll be tackling it with a full review next 'ish.

FOOTIE FANS! **RUN AMOK** to page **71** for a review of *FIFA 2004*

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ADVANCE WARNING



★ Its no surprise to find Pixar's latest at the top of the gaming charts.

↘ WHAT'S SELLING WHAT?

CHARTS

High-selling handheld heroes ahoy

ChartTrack

CHART POSITION	GAME NAME	ADVANCE RATING
★ 1	**FINDING NEMO** Nearly erases the stench of *Monster's Inc*	75%
→ 2	**POKEMON RUBY** With new packs on the way, a Xmas No.1?	94%
↓ 3	**POKEMON SAPPHIRE** Slips below Ruby on the GBA gem exchange	94%
★ 4	**SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 4** Fourth *Mario* at 4, what are the chances?	96%
↓ 5	**YU-GI-OH! WORLDWIDE EDITION** We didn't rate it, but you lot clearly do	60%
★ 6	**ADVANCE WARS 2: BLACK HOLE RISING** The GBA's greatest game hits the charts	93%
R 7	**SCOOBY DOO AND THE CYBER CHASE** Great character, good sales, average game	54%
R 8	**SONIC ADVANCE 2** Re-entry for Sega's stalwart mascot	90%
↓ 9	**HARRY POTTER & THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS** Still holding the fort for *Quidditch World Cup*	82%
→ 10	**MONSTERS' INC** Poor adventure, still stinking out the top 10	42%

KEY: ↑ Moving up ↓ Slipping down → Non-mover ★ New entry R Re-entry



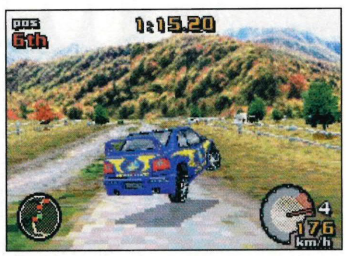
★ 1 → 2 ★ 4 ★ 6 ↑ 10

FROM: NINTENDO **OUT:** DECEMBER **ANTICIPATION:** ★★★★★

TG RALLY RACES

Rally good? Or another racing skid mark? We'll have the answer soon enough

Nintendo have picked up the rights to distribute Kemco's, *Top Gear Rally* in Europe. The first game was a shocker – with rusty GBC-esque gameplay hidden beneath an average graphical bonnet. So what are the chances of *TG Rally* passing the Advance MOT?



★ Deep but instantly fun – unlike more highbrow rally games, *TG* pits you against other cars as well as the clock.

Thankfully, not only is Jeremy Clarkson in no-way involved, but two years on, and the game engine has gone through a complete upgrade. As the screenshots attest, graphically Kemco have implemented a complete re-spray. We've already sampled some of the game's 80 courses, leather-trimmed Championship/Head-to-Head/Practice modes and eleven different cars and simply can't wait for this to leave the factory floor in December.

FROM: AM3 **OUT:** EASTER 2004 **ANTICIPATION:** ★★★☆☆

ADMIT ONE!

Your GBA turns movie player and, er, book

A device that allows TV shows, music files, photos and electronic books to run on your GBA has just been released in Japan. The gadget, a version of which, peripheral giants Intec are due to release in the UK next Easter, works by allowing you to upload content onto specially designed flash carts (pictured below). Expect a review in ADVANCE 7.





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"Spyro:Season of Ice" interactive game © 2003 Universal Interactive, Inc."Spyro:Season of Flame" interactive game © 2003 Universal Interactive, Inc. "Spyro Adventure" interactive game © 2003 Universal Interactive, Inc.Spyro and related characters are (tm) and © of Universal Interactive, Inc. All rights reserved.



CRASH THE PARTY

Crash has sold more games than Roman Abramovich has cash, and now he's out to snatch Mario's title. But how did a plucky bandicoot go from bozo to boss-man?

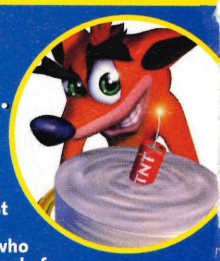


Ladies and gentlefolk, don your Advance-O-Vision glasses, we're about to show you the future. It's 2067 and after months of careful flattery, considered persuasion, purposeful obsequiousness and gutless snivelling (not to mention a Wumpa Fruit the size of a yacht) a doddery 70-something Crash has been persuaded to get get out from under his tartan blanket and fly in from his second home on the Med. He is our guest of honour this even.

The Academy For Top Hole Videogames have decided to award the mangy-looking marsupial a life-time achievement award. His has been one of the greatest careers in videogame history; a Dreamily Amazing And Frankly Terrific Award (or DAFTA) an apt reward for his life's work. And as Crash stands there, resplendent in the finest hedgehog furs available to humanity, draped around the ultra-buxom figures that are Lara Croft's infant grandchildren – a brazen journalist asks him how he outfoxed his rivals. The camera goes still and a bit blurry – like it's been shoved through a car wash or something – and Mr Bandicoot sighs thoughtfully, as if recalling something of deep significance...

It seems ridicumungous now, but when Crash Bandicoot first burst on to the videogame scene the critics weren't impressed. Everyone agreed he was one of the best original characters on the PlayStation, but then wasn't he partly

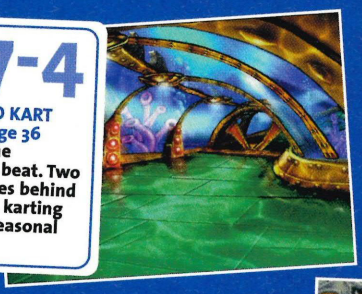
1994



● **On the Universal movie lot in Los Angeles, California, work begins on *Crash Bandicoot*. From such auspicious and glamourous environs, stardom for the longest snout in gaming beckons. Basketball star, Michael Jordan who had hung up his sneakers the year before in his first 'retirement', turns to baseball. Meanwhile, Crash dons his now trademark hi-tops in homage.**

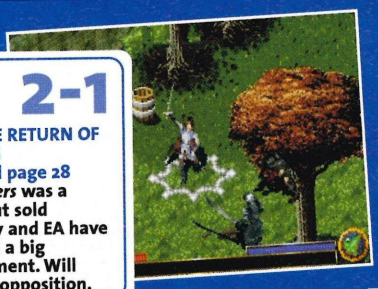
THE BATTLE FOR THE CHRISTMAS NUMBER ONE

But where's Cliff Richard?



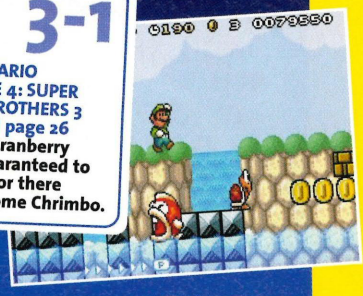
ODDS 7-4

CRASH NITRO KART
Reviewed page 36
Very much the Bandicoot to beat. Two big GBA games behind it and a good karting pedigree. A seasonal chart cracker.



ODDS 2-1

LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING
Reviewed page 28
Two Towers was a turkey but sold brilliantly and EA have promised a big improvement. Will stuff the opposition.



ODDS 3-1

SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 4: SUPER MARIO BROTHERS 3
Reviewed page 26
Like the Cranberry sauce, guaranteed to be there, or there abouts, come Chrimbo.



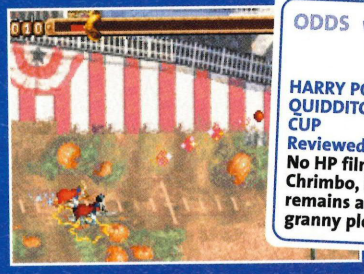
ODDS 9-2

FINDING NEMO
Reviewed last issue, 75%
Has restored Pixar's GBA name after the shocker that was *Monster's Inc.* Stocking-filler potential.



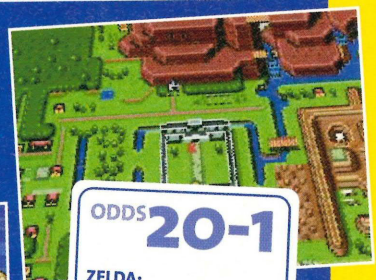
ODDS 11-2

FINAL FANTASY TACTICS
Reviewed page 22
Hironobu Sakaguchi's series makes a triumphant return to Nintendo's handheld. Better than gold, frankincense or myrhh.



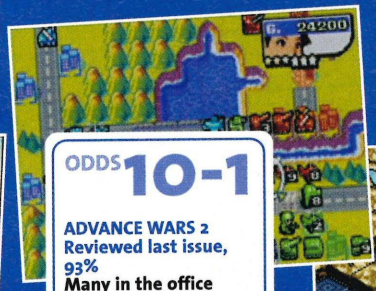
ODDS 11-2

HARRY POTTER QUIDDITCH WORLD CUP
Reviewed page 30
No HP film this Chrimbo, but this remains a sure-fire granny pleaser.



ODDS 20-1

ZELDA: A LINK TO THE PAST
Reviewed issue 4, 92%
The angel on top of the GBA games list, the price drop of the Cube may also see *Zelda* GBA sales pick up.



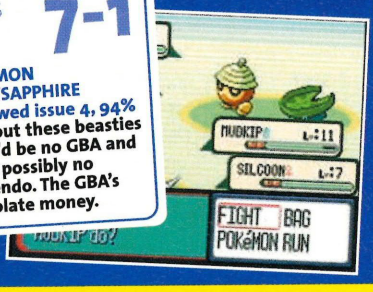
ODDS 10-1

ADVANCE WARS 2
Reviewed last issue, 93%
Many in the office consider this to be the best game available on the GBA. It's definitely the most cunning.



ODDS 12-1

YU-GI-OH! DUNGEON DICE
Not reviewed
The biggest cult to come out of Japan since those pocket monsters. It's hardcore, too.



ODDS 7-1

POKEMON RUBY/SAPPHIRE
Reviewed issue 4, 94%
Without these beasties there'd be no GBA and quite possibly no Nintendo. The GBA's chocolate money.

developed under the auspices of top Hollywood studio, Universal? And wasn't that a bit like saying he was the talented one off Fame Academy 2? Some people even said the games were too ordinary to make it on a Nintendo system, which only goes to prove that some people don't know what the Lakitu they're talking about.

If Crash's first two outings on the PS1 were the must-take-after-school-classes side of simple, they at least prepared the way for his big break, his Rachel out-of-S-Club solo single, his World Cup rescuing penalty kick – *Crash Team Racing*. Released at Christmas 2000, *CTR* was a *Mario Kart*-style racer that didn't so much propel Crash into the big time as jet propel powerslide him through it, ram the other racers off the track and then lap them a few times to rub their noses in it. Now, with the simultaneous GBA/GameCube release of *Crash Nitro Kart*, history is repeating itself.

Just as the first two PS1 games underwhelmed, Crash's first two GBA outings were inoffensively good rather than

> "Crash has sold more than 26 million wares worldwide. That's more than Robbie Williams..."

out-and-out great. It was the little touches that made *Crash Bandicoot XS*. The quite-a-lot-like-the-rock-rolling-scene-in-*Indiana Jones* chase, for example, except in *XS*, Crash's on a Polar Bear as you flee from the abominable snowman. Some 500,000 sales later, *XS* made way for the number 1 sequel, *N-Tranced*. Like it's forebear, *Crash 2* was able to hold its head high as it scrapped for supremacy with *Sonic* and *Mario*. It pleased the bean counters too, as *N-Tranced* took sales of Crash games in the UK past 2.7 million copies. It's got to the stage where Mr Bandicoot has now sold 26 million of his wares worldwide. That's more than Robbie Williams.

Now comes the next chapter of the Crash story, *Crash Nitro Kart*, an audacious attempt to take Nintendo on their own track. If *CTR* was big news, *CNK* is hold the front page stuff. While many have tried to take on *Mario Kart* in the past – just to glance down the highway of failed into-the-screen racers is to survey the smoking wreckage of *Konami Krazy Racers*,



1995

● The original Crash project is named and has a format, the now antique, Sony Playpen (whoops, Playstation – sorry). 12 months from the game's release, it is clear to makers, Naughty Dog that *Crash* will be a hit. The rest of the world has to wait. And while it waits, side impact protection (SIPS) becomes a feature on Volvo cars at the same time... weird, huh?

1996

● The humble first crate in the game is painstakingly created, these crates are to become the crux of *Crash*. At least they are when they're broken. Soon, a different type of Crash crate ships out from the States, bound for Japan. By Christmas, Crash has obliterated the Far East competition and become the best-selling foreign-developed title ever. Mario watch out, the Americans are coming...

1997

● The release of *Crash Bandicoot* in the US and Europe ensures that 1997 is the year when *Crash Bandicoot* goes global. In other games news the release of *Pokémon* in Japan made handheld gaming the biggest thing since J-Lo's bottom. It was only a matter of time before some bright sparks put Crash and the Game Boy together. In the meantime, Scottish boffins cloned a Dorsetshire sheep.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Platformers and racers – they've been Crash's staple so far. But what other games could he star in? ADVANCE racked their collective brain.



★ We've thought up lots of Crash spin offs that will never get made. Be glad.

CRASH KITCHEN: Mar-soup-ial Madness – Crash branches out into the catering business. Explore Crash's culinary side, make some Crash Mash and serve it up all slapdash against the clock.

CRASH SPLASH – Water themed mini-games. Top bombing (à la Peter Kay) and Eric Moussambani - style Olympic Drowning. Plus apple bobbing.

CRASH, BANG, WALLOP – Crash's inaugural beat-'em-up title. Fight off Rice Crispies gimps Snap, Crackle and Pop with a rocket launcher and kiddie mines.

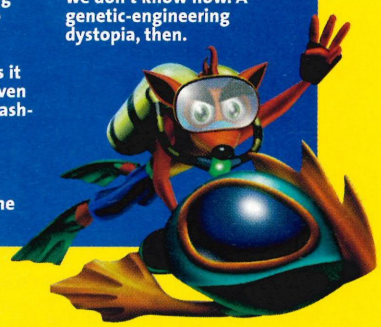
CRASH MOUSTACHE – Crash grows a moustache. Shaves it off. Only for it to, er, grow again?

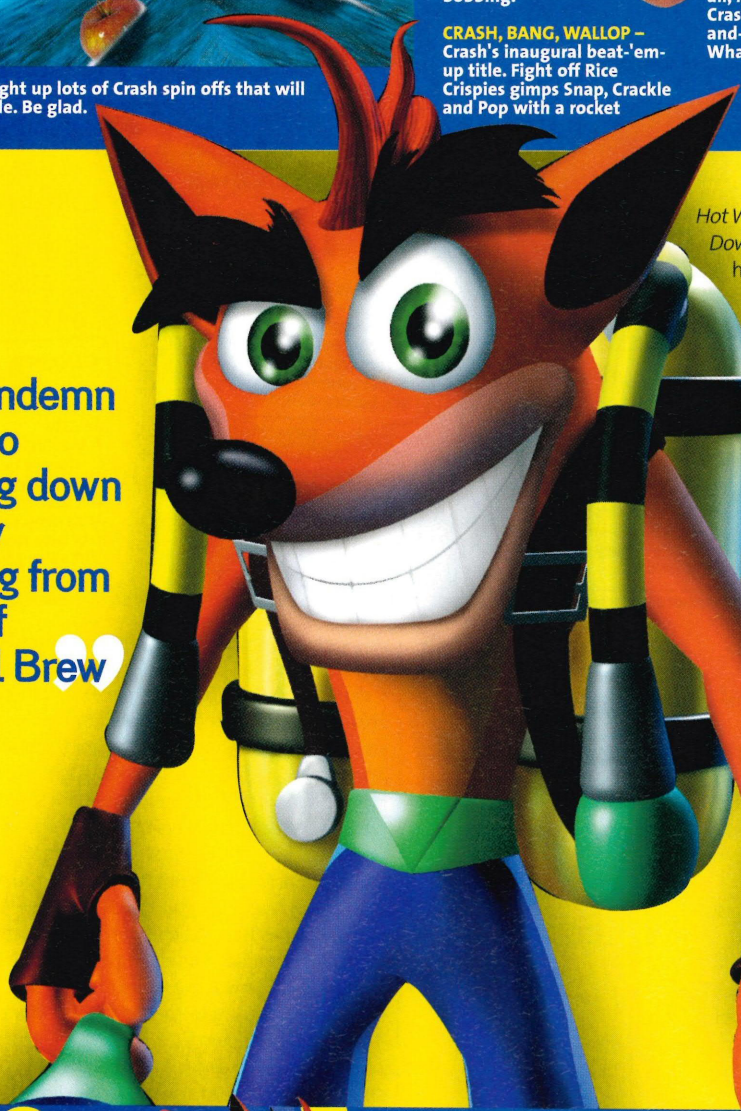
CRASH CASH – Crash is shrunk to the size of a roulette ball by Neo Cortex in a Vegas-style gambling adventure. Also, learn to forge signatures.

CRASH AND BURN – Says it all, really. Nobody, not even Crash, recovers from a crash-and-burn-situation. Whatever that is.

CRASH LASH – Saturday night at the fun pub. Get all the Crash characters absolutely sozzled. Would in no way portray binge drinking as fun or normal.

CRASH-BANDY-COOTIES – This game would somehow involve bow-legged, cootie-infested Crash clones, but we don't know how. A genetic-engineering dystopia, then.





> "Will condemn Mario to tottering down an alley swigging from a can of Special Brew"

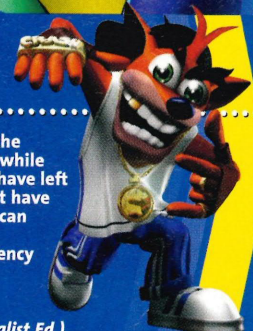
Hot Wheels, Lego, ATV, Downforce and *Driver 2* – none have ever really had the care or cash (let alone Crash) behind them to be taken seriously. *Nitro Kart* is different. The handheld version is coded by genius GBA specialists Vicarious Visions (the bods behind the *Tony Hawk's* games) as is the GameCube version of *Crash Nitro Kart*, and this is where the clever connectivity stuff starts. Unlockable bonus tracks and extras, as well as Osama-devious multiplayer duels, being the order of the day. Why Nintendo didn't bring out a new *Mario Kart* GBA game to tie in with their GC-only *Mario Kart Double Dash* title this Christmas is anyone's guess, but it's the kind of dundering lapse that'll condemn Mario to staggering down an alley, swigging from a can of Special Brew, as our Crash is lapping up the adoration of the beautiful people.

It's a staggering prospect that Nintendo's top characters should be so vulnerable to this kind of cheeky challenge, and in days of yore they'd have probably cut up our Orange hero as surely as M. Schumacher used to block out Damon Hill. The times they are-a-changing though, and here and on the surrounding pages we give our own take on what has gone so very very right for Mr Crash Bandicoot.

Now quick, get going, before old Crash starts to make his speech. The swine can ramble on for ages.

***Crash Nitro Kart* is reviewed on page 36, win Crash goodies on p82.**

1998



● *Crash 2* surpasses *Crash 1* in the bestselling games stakes. And while three games in as many years have left our Bandicoot pooped, he must have been mentally alert. How else can you explain that the year that Europe agreed on a single currency Crash drew up plans to go multiformat for the first time? *(Men in suits and suitcases of money changing hands – Capitalist Ed.)*

1999



● While *Crash* was taking a well-earned rest from his platforming antics *Pokémon* were taking over the British Isles at least partly thanks to SMTV and two-grinning Geordies. Still Crash did make a telling contribution to the games' world, *Crash Team Racing* leading PS1's Chrimbo rout of the still-born Sega Dreamcast console. Our condolences to fans of the hedgehog.

2000

● Another year, another new console. Nintendo announce the GBA, and it's a beaut. Barely bigger than a GBC, but more powerful than a SNES, it's a whole new world of handheld gaming. While he waits to make his Advance debut, Crash makes his last Sony-only bow in the below par *Crash Bash*, on the now redesigned-to-be-portable PSone.

CRASH VS MARIO: THE STORY SO FAR

Crash has been hot on the heels of Mario since 1996. Will *Crash Nitro Kart* prove to be the game that makes the podgy plumber look past-it? Here's the story of their scrap so far...

ROUND 1

MARIO 64 10/10
CRASH BANDICOOT (PS1) 7/10
Mario's as untouchable as Cassius Clay as the first round of their bout fails to get going. Yawn-o-rama.

ROUND 2

MARIO KART 64 8/10
CRASH TEAM RACING (PS1) 8/10
Crash raises his game but Mr Mario remains ahead on points. Could things be about to get interesting?

ROUND 3

MARIO PARTY 3 (N64) 6/10
CRASH BASH (PS1) 5/10
Mario's form falls right away but, er, unfortunately so does Crash's. We've seen better Audley Harrison fights.

ROUND 4

MARIO KART GBA 9/10
CRASH XS 8/10
Mario gets a new lease of life on the GBA but Crash does more than enough to keep it tight towards the bell.

ROUND 5

MARIO ADVANCE 7/10
CRASH 2: N TRANCED 8/10
Lazy rehash of ancient and obscure *Mario* game sees Crash nose in front at the death. They think it's all over...



MARIO & LUIGI ??/10
CRASH NITRO KART 8/10
Mario & Luigi fails to show for review (never a good sign) while *Crash Nitro Kart* blasts onto ADVANCE's cover...





CRASH VS BANDICOOT

In the interests of science we locked our expert, Richard Daft-as-a-brush out into the wild. Crash or Bandicoot, which better?



CRASH

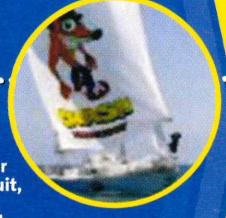
Latin name: Bandicootus ludus provectus pueris
Height: 1m
Birth date: 1996
Gestation period: Depends how many times you die, dummy
Rebirth date: December 2003
Native habitat: Sonny's Play Station (some kind of kid's toy belonging to Sonny, we think)
Migration location: Game Boy Advance
Eating habits: Apples
Noticeable physical traits: High-top kicks, bipedal, big grin
Special skills: Spinning really fast



BANDICOOT

Latin name: Perameles gunnii
Height: 32cm
Birth date: Not even Darwin knows
Gestation period: 12 days
Rebirth date: Unfortunately, Bandicoots are mortal.
Native habitat: Tasmania and Australia
Migration location: Ramsay Street
Eating habits: Carnivore, insects, mice, snails, fruit, underground bulbs
Noticeable physical traits: Second and third toes of hindfoot fused together, quadropedal
Special skills: Digging up your back garden

2001



● Vivendi Universal's promo department decide that Crash Bandicoot should sponsor a sailboat. Gushed one suit, "It makes sense for us to sponsor a boat with Crash Bandicoot." More sensibly, despite its dingy screen, the GBA becomes the most successful console to be launched in history. Oh, and ADVANCE MAGAZINE hits the shelves.

2002

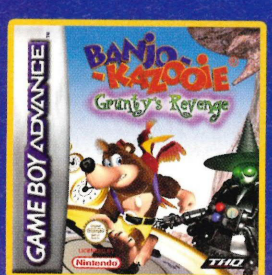
● GBAers now have a reason for wearing many-pocketed combats as Crash now comes pouch-size: *Crash Bandicoot XS* debuts on the Advance and GameCube. Our verdict: a smash. And it's the first time a Sony-launched character has his own handheld gig. As Crash bursts onto the GameCube as well, the Nintendo faithful contort themselves at the burden of choice. Do they have a new God, we wonder?

2003

● *Crash Bandicoot 2: N-Tranced* arrives at ADVANCE HQ prior to Easter release. Verdict: more crashes, more lives and more longevity than a crumple-zone dummy. Coupled with the release of the GBA SP it's a huge hit. Next we furiously buckle our seatbelts (and sensibly make a note in our diaries) for the crash landing of the next game in the series, the game that affords even more awful puns: *Crash Nitro Kart*. Ladies and gentlemen, start your engines...

BANJO IS BACK



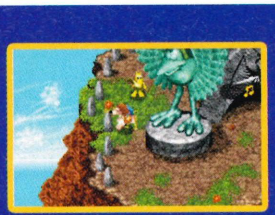


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Reviews

Get stuffed! It's the Chrimbo review blow out! We'll help you sort the tinsel from the turkeys...



That shadow helps you see where you're going to land. Or crash.



SPYRO ADVENTURE

GAMEINFO

- **PUBLISHER** Vivendi Universal
- **PHONE** 0118 920 9100
- **WEB** www.vugames.com
- **PRICE** £30
- **SAVE** To cart
- **LINK-UP** Yes
- **OUT** Out Now

As we pick our way through this crazy, unpredictable life it's good to know that there are a handful of certainties we can rely on when nothing else makes sense. The sun will rise. Parmesan cheese will smell like vomit. Your bus will turn up the instant someone in the queue lights a cigarette. Oh, and during the run up to Christmas, Spyro's fellow dragons will always misplace something or someone vitally important to them and hence require the little purple people toaster to roam far and wide trying to locate it/them.

In 2001's Season Of Ice, it was the Dragon Realm's fairies, who (bless 'em) had been encased in ice. Come Winter 2002 and the butter-taloned dragons had somehow let their fireflies get scattered all over the shop. Very careless.

And so we come to the present day and *Spyro Adventure*. The nights are drawing in. The log fire beckons, but as the US



The ape has escaped! And he's editing ADVANCE. Agent 9, on the other hand, makes a welcome return from earlier *Spyro* games.

GET VENT!

Spyro Adventure's two brilliant multiplayer levels are hidden behind suspicious looking vents in the main game and feature Agent 9, the intrepid space monkey from *Season Of Flame*, and a new face: Sgt Byrd, the world's only flying penguin (raised by humming birds, don't you know)...



★ Sgt Byrd's Rescue mission requires you to rescue comrades stranded in a peril strewn underground cavern. It's a bit like Weston-Super-Mare. But not quite that bad.



★ And it's not easy. Byrd's flight involves constant tapping of the A button. Add the extra weight of a penguin buddy holding onto your flippers and you've a real challenge...



★ Agent 9's Rescue mission is a different kettle of bananas entirely, requiring superb stealth skills. And absolutely no monkeying around. Well, not much anyway.



★ Armed with a sticky grapple gun and your trusty vacuum rifle, your mission is to rescue your captured colleagues, Agents 1-8 without getting spotted. Great stuff!



★ **'Lettuce' begin: This looks like a part of someone's quest list. But whose?**

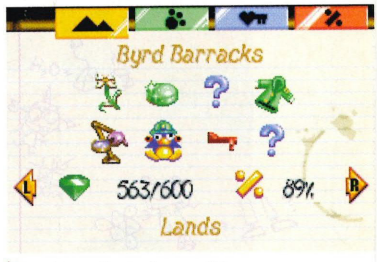


★ **There's something magical about this place. Why don't we stay a while and have wand for the road...**

title suggests, (*Spyro Adventure* is known to our American chums and ADVANCE issue 05 as *Spyro: Attack Of The Rhynocs*) the pintsized flamethrower isn't going to be putting his feet up any time soon. The truth is, those joy trampling bullies, the Rhynocs, wouldn't be attacking at all if it weren't for Spyro. While visiting his friend the Professor, the boffin's cookie and milk serving robot butler goes haywire. Spyro intervenes, but in doing so accidentally rips a hole in the flimsy fabric of space itself. Worse still, it's the bit separating the Dragon Realms from the Rhynocs' Realm. What are the odds, eh? Cue chaos as Ripto and his Rhynoc cohorts invade Spyro's homeworld. The hole must be closed, but (wait for it) to do that Spyro is going to have to track down and borrow all of the Realms' precious Dragon Hearts. And of course, as two GBA *Spyro* platformers have taught us, that's going to take a whole lot more than a few phonecalls to sort out.

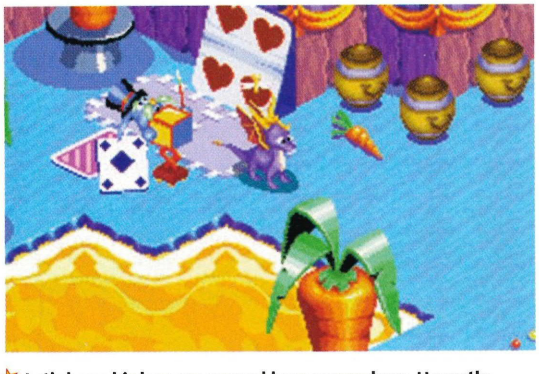
Top Tip
Have you considered using your super icy breath to create a bridge over the water? Maybe you can glide to a hidden land...

If you're familiar with *Spyros 1* and *2* the chances are you'll be hard pushed to see much of a difference between them and *Spyro Adventure*. There's a good reason for this. *Spyro Adventure* has been developed by Digital Eclipse, the team behind the two earlier titles, and is built from the same game engine (albeit an enhanced version) responsible for their distinctive, isometric world view. Furthermore, on the surface, there's a distinct sense of solidarity here with the content of the earlier games. There are themed lands to explore (14 this time around) with tasks given in one often spreading into several others. There are mini games and unlockable secret areas scattered all around, inviting you to return to areas you thought you'd cleared before. You get to play as other characters too, for a spell (see Get Vent!). And if you've ever had a brush in with Spyro before on any gaming platform you'll instantly recognise the likes of Bentley, Bianca, Sheila and Moneybags.

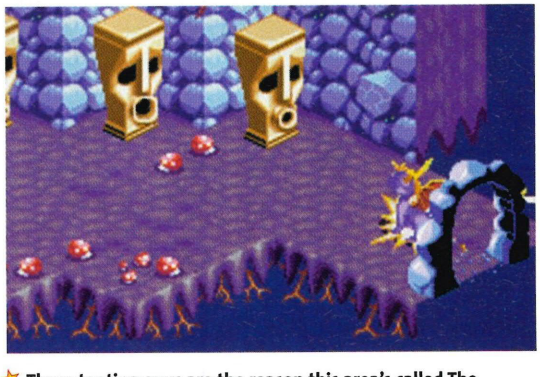


★ **We've collected everything. The penguin, the desk lamp, the, er, maths signs.**

> "Spyro accidentally rips a hole through time and space. What are the odds, eh?"



★ **Let's hope his legs are around here somewhere. Honestly, another copycat *Rayman*. One's enough. Really.**



★ **These tooting guys are the reason this area's called The Whistling Cave. Careful, though, or they'll be your headstones.**



Bags of fun: Each land has one of Moneybag's vaults. Getting in is the tricky part.



Our Mr lava lava man doesn't have mush-room for manoeuvre against this foul fungus.

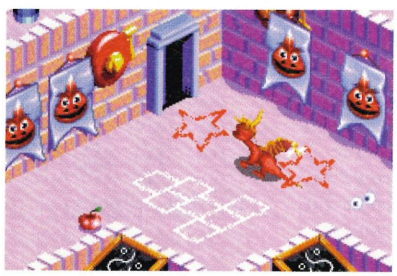


Cave alert: Without the Yeti lamp, this area would be too dark to visit. Like the bottom of Art Ed Alvin's bed.

> "An extremely enjoyable, sharply executed and beguiling platform adventure..."

But while *Spyro Adventure* isn't *Spyro* reinvented, it is Spyro refined. And for that, we are eternally grateful. Well, until *Spyro 4* comes out next year at the very least. Refinement comes in a number of forms, the graphics being a prime example. While the slanted isometric view still takes a little while to acclimatise to, so far as controlling our lilac lizard friend is concerned, the depth and scale of the environments achieved using it is really impressive. Explore the high icy shelves and curling archipelago of islands around Sgt Byrd's Barracks and you'll know exactly what we mean. The detail of the animation throughout, too, is a genuine pleasure to behold. From the blinking eyes in the dark caves leading to Rabbits' Habitat, to Agent 9's cheeky chimp grin and beautifully balanced grappling gun acrobatics, there's always some morsel of GBA eye-candy to enjoy. Fail to get a giggle from the sight of the Dragon Realms' sheep bleeting and sprinting away from Spyro on their hind legs, and frankly there's little hope for you this side of humour bypass surgery. Hell, even Spyro's idle animations are worth waiting to see...

From a gameplay perspective, *Spyro Adventure* is the least 'platformy' *Spyro* yet. Don't get us wrong, you'll still find yourself judging leaps and timing runs on occasion, but this time around the emphasis is firmly on exploration and quests. In the early stages of the game it feels like everyone you meet has a list of items they need you to track down. Thankfully the game's superb 'journal'-based inventory automatically logs all of your main quests, your progress, special items, and new attacks as well as giving you access to the cart based save slots (of which there are three). There is also a wealth of mini -quests that provide some of the game's highlights as well as some of its most challenging moments. An obvious one of these is the excellent stealth-based Agent 9 mini-mission that once unlocked is available as a multiplayer game, but there are many others including a frantic race against two sprinting thieves and an isometric



Skool's out: Even thieves need to learn their skills somewhere, y'know.



That Rhynoc's chucking exploding apples. Better toast him quickly!



Ice cubes, ice cubes everywhere but not a root beer to drink. Or, ahem, something.



Win this race and who knows where the reward may take you. *The National Lottery Jet Set*, we shouldn't wonder.

CREATURE (DIS)COMFORTS

Watching the local wildlife is key to Spyro's success in reaching all the areas in *Adventure's* 14 lands. Note their behaviour and see if you can use it to give you a helping hand/hoof/flipper etc.



The heating's broken in the Dragon Realm library. Try warming up the flutterbugs with your fire breath and they might just give you a lift to a higher level.



Walruses are a nuisance if you're a penguin, but not for you. Freeze them into a block of ice and they make perfect popsicle ferries to unknown areas of the map.



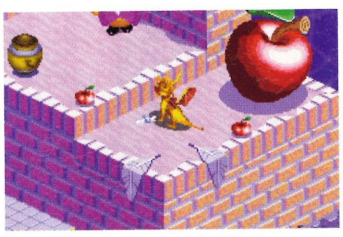
These springboks have a fiery temper and won't keep still. A quick blast of icy breath will cool their jets and allow you to make a temporary stepping stone. Neat, huh?



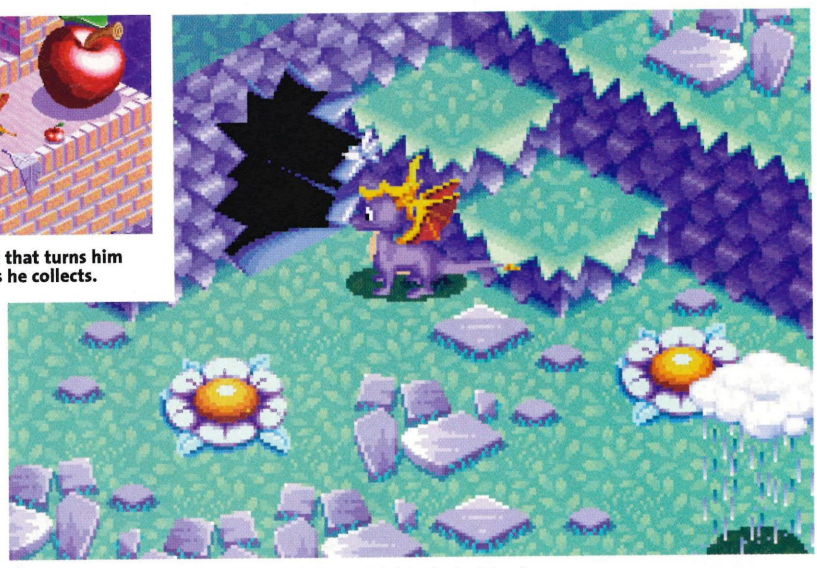
Moles hate tornadoes (everyone knows that, right?) so frighten them with your twister breath, leap in the top hats and use them to catapult you to hidden areas.



Help the fairy and get yourself a Dragon Heart. What a hero.



Spyro's got a potion that turns him the colour of the gems he collects.



***Spyro Adventure* world is a weird place, alright. The butchest flowers we've ever seen and a mountain made out of glass.**



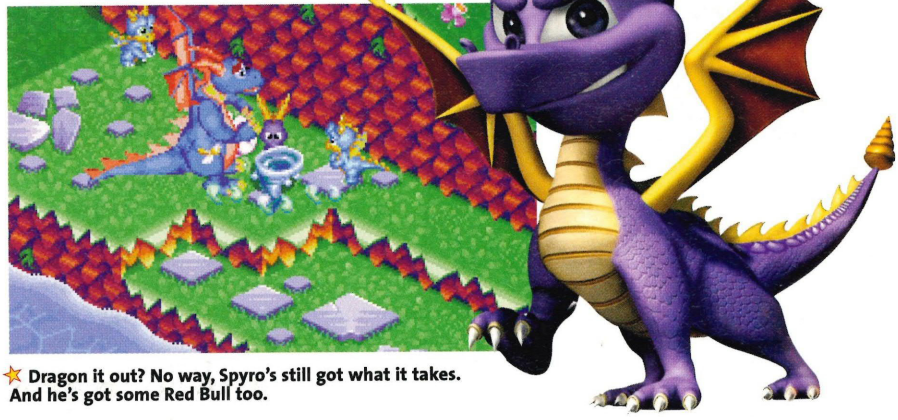
Angel delight: In a jam? Use your quick escape to get home. Or the number 59 bus. It'll be along in a minute.

Rhynoc bombing run that harks back to the days of *Zaxxon*.

Weak points? Not too many, it must be said. In the heat of the moment the faux 3D perspective can force you into making control errors, and given the size of some of the lands, a map would have been a real benefit, if only to help you get a fix on virgin territory. But really these are minor quibbles in what is a supremely enjoyable, sharply executed and ultimately beguiling platform adventure. Now let's see how Digital Eclipse go about improving on this... **PAUL FITZPATRICK**



Sheep joy! Your dragonfly Sparx likes sheep. They're not so sure about him. And neither are we...



Dragon it out? No way, Spyro's still got what it takes. And he's got some Red Bull too.

LOOK 'N' FEEL
Spyro's candy coloured universe was made for the GBA.

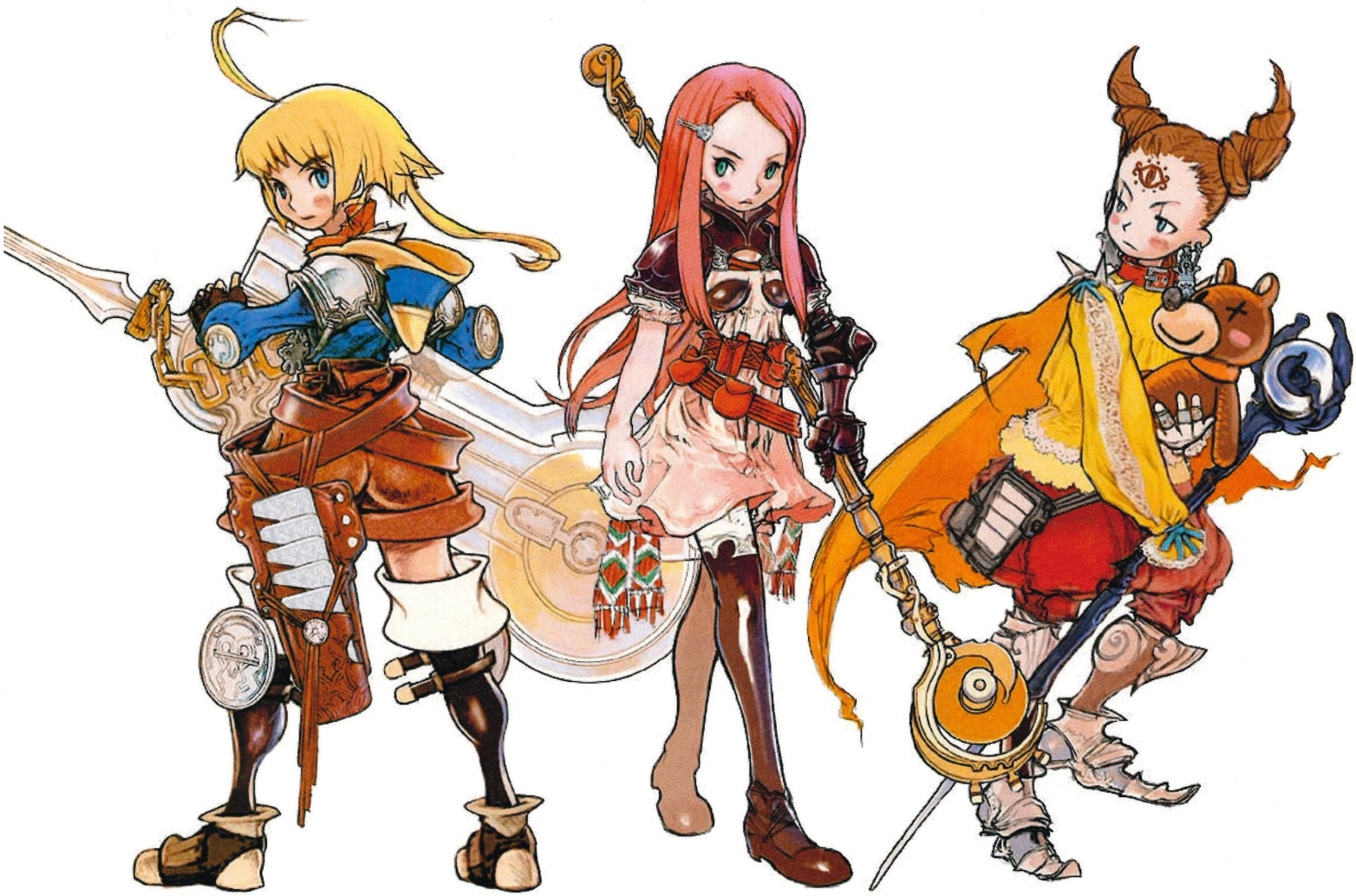
GAMEPLAY
Some classic platform elements but *SA* is more about exploration.

LIFESPAN
If you're a completist, collecting every last gem will take ages.

DIFFICULTY
Some tricky mini-games, but generally the game wants to draw you on.

ADVANCE OPINION
Short of a hardware upgrade, it's hard to imagine how the *Spyro* universe could be finessed further. A flamin' tasty game.

92%



FINAL FANTASY TACTICS ADVANCE

GAMEINFO

- **PUBLISHER** Nintendo
- **PHONE** 01932 895390
- **WEB** www.nintendo.co.uk
- **PRICE** £30
- **SAVE** To cart
- **LINK-UP** Yes
- **OUT** Now

Make sure you've got a good couple of hours free in your schedule before kicking off your adventure. The opening sequence of events take a good half hour to lead you into the game proper – and the battles that soon follow will ensnare you in a game so involving you'll be playing it at every possible opportunity. And before you know it, the world as you remember it will quietly slip away.

You wouldn't think it from the opening stages. The game begins slowly, with a painstaking, baby-steps style tutorial that laboriously teaches you the basics of the battle system. At least it thinks it does. After that, as per every *Final Fantasy* game ever, there's an excruciatingly dull story-telling sequence that delivers the horribly hackneyed plot. You, the hero, along with your friends in the 'real-world' read a dusty old tome that's brought to your house after school. This seemingly innocent event turns our heroes world into an



Certain attacks allow you to target specific areas of an enemies body. Attack the legs and they'll be paralysed.

FIGHT CLUB

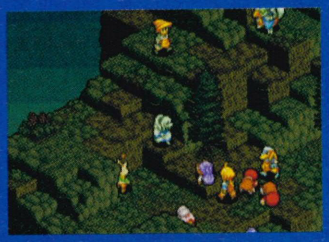
Turn-based battles make up most of the action in this game. The fighting system is pretty basic on the face of it, but the more you play the more you begin to uncover its hidden depths and subtleties. Learning what works, why and when, will be the key to victory.



★ First off you need to check out the lay of the land and the units you're facing. Higher ground will let you deal more damage on your foes below, while rivers and lakes will disable your army's attacks.



★ Each unit can only move a set number of squares depending on the terrain they're standing on. Make sure more mobile units don't get too far ahead – isolating them from the rest of your army.



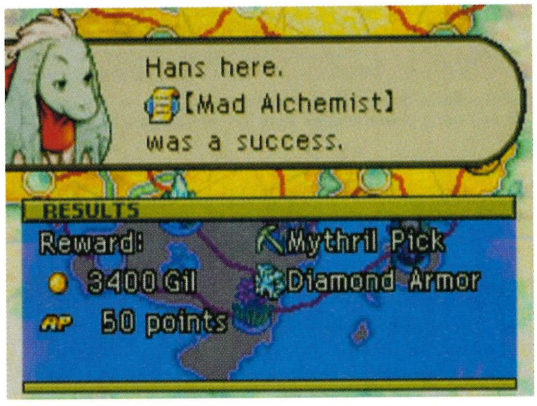
★ It's always better to attack an enemy from behind. If they can see you when you attack them, they'll probably manage to dodge your attack – making you waste a valuable turn. Cheats prosper, remember that.



★ Kill off an enemy, or take advantage of one of the battle's laws, and the judge will award you points that can be used for devastating combos. Break a rule though, and you'll be sent to prison.



★ There are many intriguing diversions to the game's main quest. Find and capture a critter and you can train it up here.



★ Some missions require you to send individual team members to fight alone – make sure you choose the right one...

alternate reality overnight. A world where the game 'Final Fantasy' replaces reality – and brings with it all the monsters, magic and dangers you'd expect. Once you've found yourself in this alternate reality, you're 'treated' to yet another battle tutorial. 'Let me get into the beeping game proper', you'll be thinking. Then the game'll start and even though the tutorials have been going on for, like, a week, it'll be as if you've been thrown in at the deep-end – the game's overworld map.

Top Tip
Don't rush into the game's main missions. You can enter extra battles by watching at the various clan's moves round the map.

At this point it's difficult to feel anything but horribly, horribly confused. *FFTA* is one of those rare games where consulting the game's excellent manual is a near necessity. Faced with a mass of statistical information for each party member, reams and reams of menus and customization choices it's difficult not to feel disheartened. In comparison to something like, say, *Advance Wars* it all feels ludicrously over-complicated. Each weapon, armor, or item, not only affects an individual characters strength, defense, magic resistance, movement potential and agility, but they also enable your army to use various techniques and abilities. You can spend simply hours – especially when you start buying items from the game's shop and recruiting new members to your army – just tinkering with individual characters. It's practically a pastime in it's own right, and an integral part of the main component of the game – battling.

Unlike your usual *Final Fantasy* games – *Tactics* is less about adventuring and exploring and more about turn-based battles. Missions in the game can be purchased from the pubs that you'll find in the game's towns. The more expensive the mission, the tougher the battle and the greater the rewards. From the overworld map, you can access different areas you've unlocked. Place your party over that specific area and you'll be given a list of the missions you've bought for that region. Choose to accept it and you'll be whisked off to the battlefield. It's in this mode that you'll spend 80% of your time and, much like

> "You can spend simply hours in the game's armoury, and selecting your army..."



★ Regina used to be an archer. Once she levelled up high enough we changed her to a sniper, enabling her to turn invisible.



★ Obey the judges rules or kill an enemy and you'll be awarded Judge Points. These can then be spent on devastating attacks.



Getting your team to work together is vitally important. If you're cunning enough, you can get them to concentrate their strength in one super-powered (and visually splendid) attack.



This is what the real world looks like. You and your friends are trying to get the fantasy world to change back to normal.



The game begins with your main character playing in school. It's here that the game teaches you the basics of fighting.



Advance Wars, it's an extremely compulsive experience. Not to mention a surprising one. To begin each battle you need to check out the rules of engagement. Some of these laws will ban certain techniques, items and weapons from the battlefield – while others will reward you for using specific techniques, items and weapons. Much like in a game of football, breaking a law will see the character in breach of the regulation being given a red or yellow card. A red card will see your character – not only being sent off the battlefield, but also to prison – where their freedom must be bought for a hefty price. The yellow card, serves as a warning. Two yellow cards and the offending character will be sent straight to the slammer. So that's where Blunkett gets his ideas.

Next up, you need to select which of your party will be fighting. There are five different races, and over 40 different jobs to be assigned to each. This opens up a staggering array of unit options. Thieves, monks, fencers, snipers, archers, gunmen, black mages, ninjas – the list is almost endless – and selecting the right team for the job is vital to victory on the battlefield. The skirmishes all take place in a small area, divided up into squares. Your different units can only move a certain distance, likewise, their different attacks can only strike enemies certain distances away. Learning to position your units strategically, and to use key units at the right time, is a hugely rewarding experience, as is turning the tide of battle from being hopelessly lost to vastly in your favour. After a just a few battles you'll soon find yourself sneaking in a few battles – or even a few turns, thanks to the games considerate saving policy – whenever you can manage it. On the train, at lunchtime, even when you're taking a dump. Any spare time you have will always be enough for just a few more movements on the battlefield.



Little story bits like these often precede the more important missions that take place. More of this would have been nice.

"Forgiving enough to play in bite size chunks, yet has a wealth of depth..."



Montblanc is a moogle that you meet at the start of the game. He's one of the best magic users in your team by far.



These are all the jobs available to you – but you'll have to work very hard to access the better ones, like the Ninjas.

POWER FROM THE PEOPLE

There are five races that populate the world, each have their own strengths and weaknesses that you need to take into account. There are also loads of different jobs you can give them – each race is better at some jobs that others, so you'll need to experiment to see what works best with each.



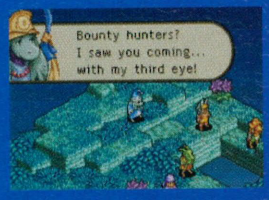
★ **HUMANS**
Humans, you might have heard of them. We're the all-rounders of the bunch. And as we're proficient in most skills – we're valuable members of any army.



★ **MOOGLES**
These little fluffy things are established *Final Fantasy* stars, so you may already be familiar with them. They're also by far the best magic users around.



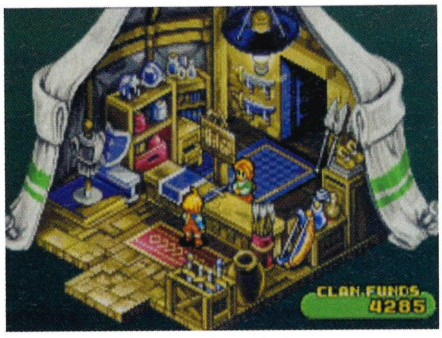
★ **VIERA**
This slender, agile race is the quickest of the lot – making them ideal fencers, archers and snipers. Their long-range attacks are as powerful as they're weak up-close.



★ **NU MOU**
The worst of the lot for all-out fighting. They're also pretty slow – however, they make brilliant healers and can also be used effectively against the enemy as auxiliary units.



★ **BANGAA**
The brute force of any army. Get them tooled up with armor and heavy weapons and they'll kick the living daylights out of anything that gets in the way.



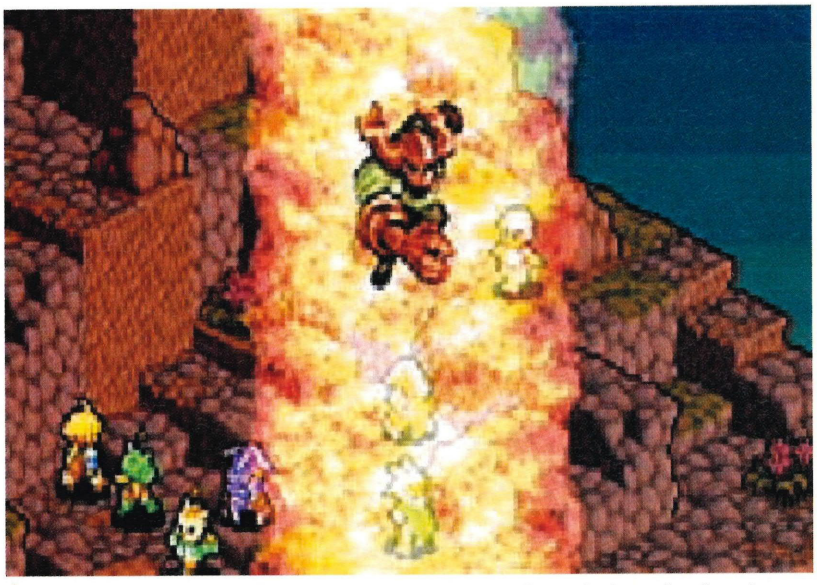
★ **The prices of items vary from shop to shop, so make sure you have a good look around every one.**



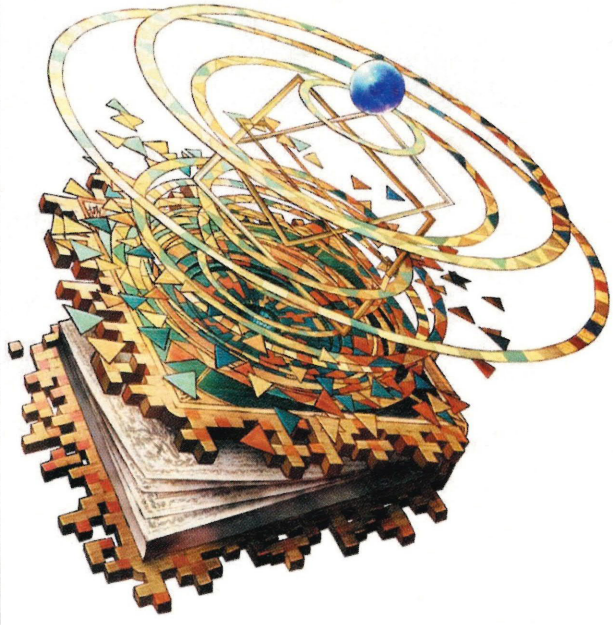
★ **The boozer is the 'hub' of the game. There's one in each town, and it's here that you buy missions.**



★ **There's plenty of story to begin with, but very little in the actual game itself. Just LOADS of fights.**



★ **Summons spells are the most powerful in the game. Many of you who have played previous *Final Fantasy* games may well know this one – it's Ifrit, fiery hell demon and smasher of rocks.**



Suffice to say then, that *Final Fantasy Tactics Advance* is a game you should definitely look to pick up. It's forgiving enough to let you play in bite-size chunks, yet has a wealth of depth that will engage even the most hardened strategy junkie. Customising individual soldiers, exploring the benefits of the frighteningly detailed job and ability system and complementing each deficiency with a cunning strength is enough to keep you going for well over 60 hours. But because of the subtlety of *Final Fantasy*'s, ahem, fighting system, and given that there are over 400 missions on offer, *FFTA* will probably last you considerably longer then that. Add to this a brilliant two-player co-operative mode and you're looking at one of the most essential games this year has seen. **GERAINT RHYS EVANS**

LOOK 'N' FEEL
Beautifully drawn characters and isometric landscapes.

LIFESPAN
Over 400 missions and brilliant two-player games. Months.

GAMEPLAY
Turn-based battles at their finest with staggering levels of depth.

DIFFICULTY
Starts off easy enough, but soon escalates into a tour de force.

ADVANCE OPINION
The kind of game that will stay in your GBA for months to come. Rewarding and addictive, *Tactics* is a labour of love.

91%

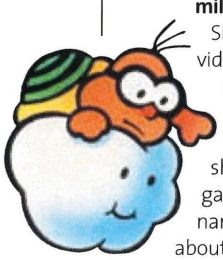


SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 4
SUPER MARIO BROS. 3

GAMEINFO

- **PUBLISHER** Nintendo
- **PHONE** 020 73073103
- **WEB** www.nintendo.co.uk
- **PRICE** £35
- **SAVE** To cart
- **LINK-UP** Yes
- **OUT** Now

An amazing 15 million people have bought this game. Just to recap, for the slower amongst you, that's 15 M.I.L.L.I.O.N. Way back in 1990, miles before your Laras, your Snakes and your Bandicoots were even dreamed up, before PSones and PlayStation 2s became as indispensable as a household Hoover, before TV shows about games, before films about games, before games became mainstream. That's when this game, this ridiculous, jumping, running game featuring a dwarven plumber with a Tom Selleck 'tash, and Chuckle Brother dungarees was released. It was launched into a video game era bereft of today's magazine, electronic and televisual hype machines, and yet it sold 15 million copies. Why? How?



Simply put, because it's brilliant. Astounding. As video games go, it's damn near perfect. Now admittedly, a story that involves a baddy called Bowser forcing a cartoon land into disarray by turning all the kings into animals, is somewhat shy of classic status. But since when have video games ever challenged literature and cinema in narrative delivery? No, *Super Mario Bros 3* is all about gameplay. A solid control dynamic, a recognisable character and a game world which has perfect economy of detail. It's a style that's become utterly iconic – which is kind of shorthand for saying that loads of people have ripped it off. It's not for nothing that many furrow-browed beard-strokers still maintain, utterly straight-faced, that this is still the best video game ever made.

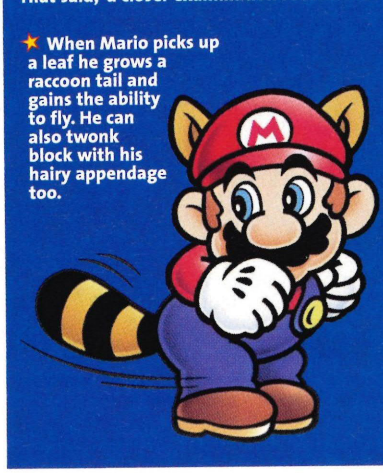


Tanooki Mario (see panel) should have no problem dispatching these flying blobs. Easy does it though.



ARMANI, VERSACE, MARIO BROS?

While all Italian certainly, it is not exactly the world of Mario one usually first chooses to look when considering clothing. That said, a closer examination reveals that a oversized 'tash isn't the only stylish preference of our favourite plumber.



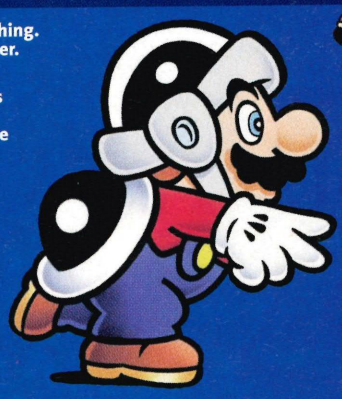
★ When Mario picks up a leaf he grows a raccoon tail and gains the ability to fly. He can also twonk block with his hairy appendage too.



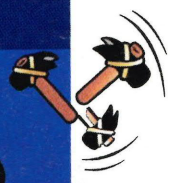
★ Tanooki Mario, for this is he, appears when Mario picks up a Tanooki doll, logically enough. He can become a statue now.



★ A little slow on land, but this frog suit is vital for nippy aquatic platforming. Nice shade of green too.



★ This hammer suit allows Mario to deflect fire balls (when crouched) and to toss a pair of hammers wasting tough to kill enemies. Smart enough.



Yet on paper it's difficult to impart exactly why it's so darn good. Of course there's running and jumping and that beautifully weighted Mario skid, which needs to become utterly intuitive if one is to attain perfection. There's the bouncing on baddies bonces to either destroy the critters, or at the very least, briefly incapacitate them. There's eight massive worlds crammed to the guts with water perils, plumber-eating plants, bottomless holes and bouncy platforms. There's a bunch of power-ups to aid your all-to-easily ended quest, such as the gloriously named Warp Whistle and the Frog and Tanooki Suit. There's the often irritating but always challenging boss battles – as at the end of each level you have to take on one of Bowser's kids. Plus, in this GBA version, there's brand new hidden levels and secret features, not to mention the inclusion of multi-play link-up frolics using the original *Mario Bros* game. Phew, a lot of content then. And there should be more – as our friends stateside are enjoying bonus *Mario Advance 4* levels with the aid of the still-to-be-released -here E-Card reader.

Top Tip

When you get into a rhythm the temptation is to fire on. Belay that order! Take it easy or you'll dash into peril and lose lives.

Still, the amount of game on offer is mammoth. But this doesn't really explain why this game excels so. Surely, lots of games have similar features? And yes they do – now. For this title kick-started many of the features taken for granted in today's games. And not just that. It still plays better than most of them too. Completing the game is a massive undertaking and this teamed with the unassailable gameplay quality, the inherent fun of the thing and (for a platformer) the astounding lack of perversely irritating moments and you've got a game that you can't not buy. Well you could, but you'd be foolish. Go get it now and discover for yourself the greatness that we've struggled to put into words here. STEPHEN PIERCE

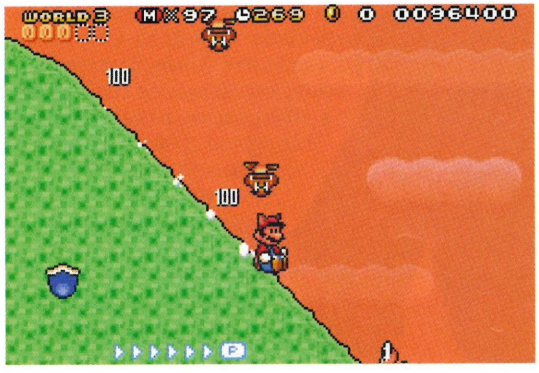


★ Your progress is viewable via the handy map which plonks up after a level is complete. This is deeply early in the game.



★ Old school fun with some link-up, multiplayer action. OAP, yes. But it's still got it.

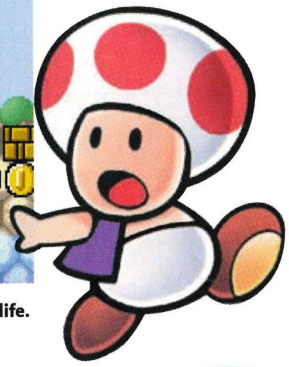
> "Furrow-browed beard-strokers maintain that this is still the best game ever made..."



★ With some raccoon style enemy whacking, it's a breeze to slay the baddies barring your path. They never knew what hit 'em.



★ Even the simplest situations can easily cause great loss of life. Get too cocky and the game'll rear up and snaffle your lives.



LOOK 'N' FEEL
The classic pastel environment, super defined and glorious.

LIFESPAN
Completion represents a gargantuan year-eating exercise.

GAMEPLAY
Perfectly balanced platforming mayhem. And then some.

DIFFICULTY
The hardness gradient is beautifully weighted. An addictive blighter too.

ADVANCE OPINION
Simply one of, if not the best, game for your GBA. If you haven't played it, we envy you, as you've got it all to come.

96%



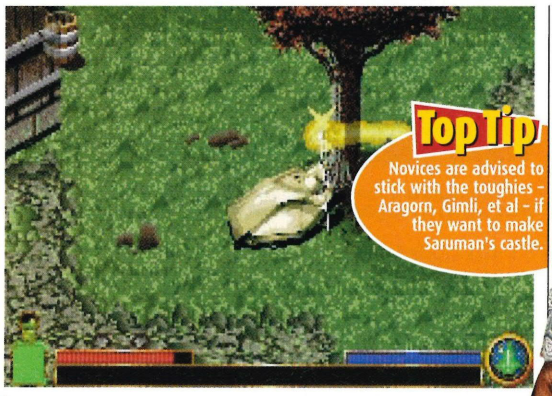


Guess what you have to do here? Beat off a load of nasties by pressing B a lot. And then hammering B some more.

LORD OF THE RINGS RETURN OF THE KING

GAMEINFO

- **PUBLISHER** EA
- **PHONE** 01932 450000
- **WEB** www.uk.ea.com
- **PRICE** £35
- **SAVE** To cart
- **LINK-UP** Yes
- **OUT** Now



We've a suspicion, that in a minute, you'll get to press B. But perhaps we're being cynical...



In this thrilling section you get to press B quite a lot. And then nail it again and again.

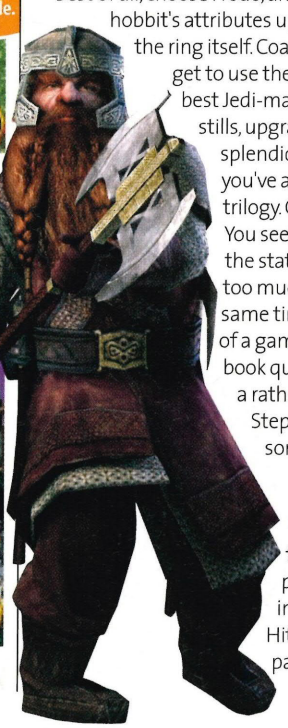
"Under the professional sheen all you have is a pretentious *Gauntlet* clone..."

So much about *LOTR: Return Of The King* is impressive. First of all, there's the fact that you can play as any of the main characters. Your choice of character affects the way the game unfolds. Plump for Aragorn and you'll be a swarthy type who goes around beating up things that go slime in dungeons, while pick girl, Eowyn, and you'll spend time making you hair look nice, or something.

Best of all, choose Frodo, and when you've built the puny hobbit's attributes up to Level 3, you'll get hold of the ring itself. Coax him up to Level 12 and you'll get to use the ring to control your foes in best Jedi-master tradition. Throw in film stills, upgradeable weapons and some splendidly drawn backdrops and you've a fitting climax to an epic trilogy. Or so you'd think.

You see, under the professional sheen, the stats and menus which tell you too much and almost nothing at the same time – there isn't actually much of a game here. A mammoth three-book quest has become, in EA's hands, a rather pretentious *Gauntlet* clone. Step right, hit B. Hit B again. Hit B some more. Now hit B. That's it.

Perhaps we're exaggerating. What we're *really* annoyed about is the fact that the *LOTR* had the potential to be massive, and instead, it's merely diverting. Hit B again before you turn the page, won't you? **SCOTT ANTHONY**



LOOK 'N' FEEL
Middle Earth GBA is a largely impressive place to roam.

LIFESPAN
Plenty of game, finding the gameplay is a mythical quest in itself, though.

GAMEPLAY
Underneath the 'ambient' technology gubbins, you've a basic fighter.

DIFFICULTY
The limited number of moves makes *Return Of The King* especially tricky.

ADVANCE OPINION
Offers only a small improvement on the remarkably average *Two Towers* game. Not the crowning moment we hoped for.

62%

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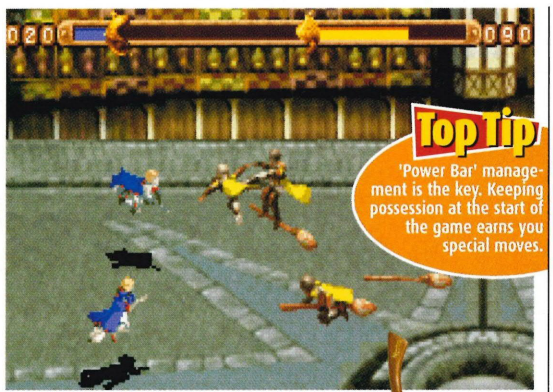




HARRY POTTER
QUIDDITCH WORLD CUP

GAMEINFO

- **PUBLISHER** EA
- **PHONE** 01932 450000
- **WEB** www.uk.ea.com
- **PRICE** £35
- **SAVE** To cart
- **LINK-UP** Yes
- **OUT** Now



Forget all that 'young Potter' public school stuff, Quidditch is violent.



Once the snitch is released, the game switches into an *Afterburner*-style mode.

We're still not sure how French developers, Magic Pockets, pulled this off. Quidditch ought to make for a terrible videogame. It's just so complex. The majority of players float around throwing a ball through hoops. Then you've got beaters trying to knock those players off. And then, there are two seekers flying around in pursuit of the game-ending snitch.

So, how have the codies brewed all these elements together? By bubbling basketball-esque bits, *Road Rash* and *Afterburner* together, that's how. Despite the fragmented nature of the game, it really works. Sure, the Hogwarts-based tutorial mode is lengthy. And HP fans may be miffed that the house tournament (where you can opt to take control of Gryffindor, Slytherine, Hufflepuff or Ravenclaw) is not the centre of the game, but rather a warm-up for an inter-nation World Cup. But there's something refreshing about the manic pace of *HPQWC*.

Particularly pleasing is the way special moves (such as unstoppable shots) can be earned and the manner that competitions are won – on points scored rather than straight victories. This brings a tactical depth to the otherwise frenetic games, and ensures that catching the snitch is not the be all and end all it is on Rowling's page. With a new game mode being 'discovered' everytime you so much as click through a menu screen, and all manner of collectibles thrown in for good measure, *HPQWC* is big enough to make the wait for the next 'proper' Harry adventure, fly by. **SCOTT ANTHONY**

> "There's a surprising amount of tactical depth to the frenetic Quidditching action..."

LOOK 'N' FEEL
There's a lot going on, and the perspective is sometimes just wrong.

LIFESPAN
As with the first two titles, EA give a wizard fan everything they could want.

GAMEPLAY
There's room for button-bashers and more thoughtful players to prosper.

DIFFICULTY
Winning the world cup requires sustained brilliance. Testing, then.

ADVANCE OPINION
Take those Harry-tinted specs off, no matter what you think of the over-hyped one, this is an unusual EA Sports offshoot.

81%

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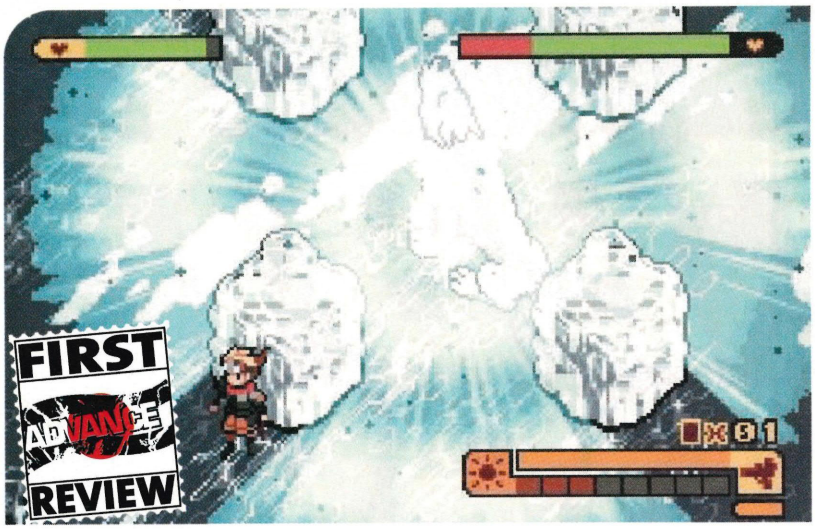
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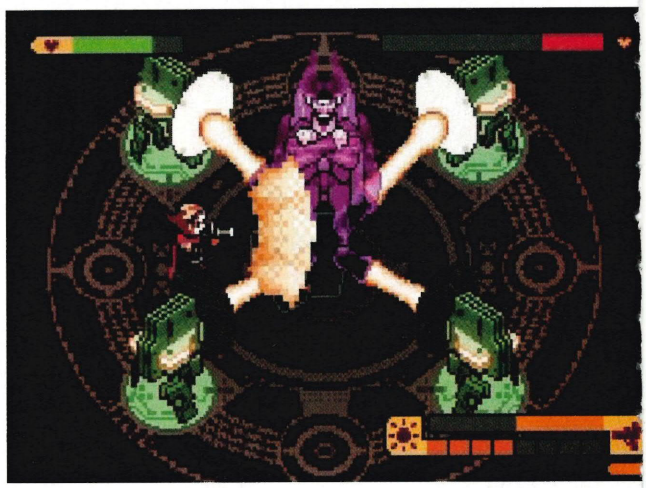
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UNIVERSAL INTERACTIVE

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You'll have to drag each boss's coffin into the sun – but there's less than a dozen points where you *have* to be in daylight.

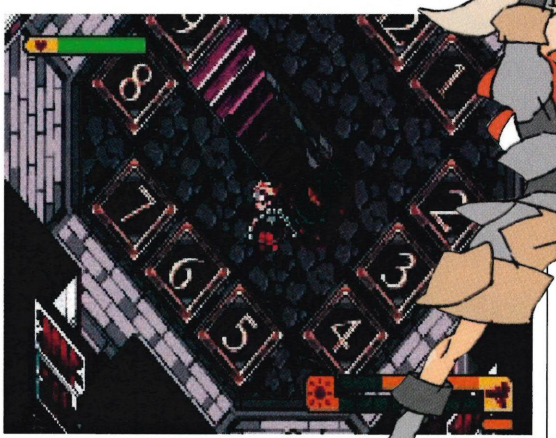
BOKTAI: THE SUN IS IN YOUR HAND

GAMEINFO

- **PUBLISHER** Konami
- **PHONE** 01895 470503
- **WEB** www.konami-europe.com
- **PRICE** TBC
- **SAVE** To cart
- **LINK-UP** Yes
- **OUT** March 2004



Boktai's secrets, like this sun bridge, will only appear in daylight.



The puzzles start easy, but by the end they'll be giving you headaches.

Mostly, game subtitles lie – 'The Awakening of Armageddon!' usually means, 'The Boring Old Platformer!' – but in *Boktai* the sun really is in your hand. The game comes on a hunchback, see-through cart which has a light sensitive chip in the top corner. Since you're playing as a vampire hunter it makes perfect sense. Who'd want to go after those guys in the dark?

The game knows when it's daylight and when it's not – electric light sources won't fool it – and the world inside your GBA changes accordingly. Your only weapon against the staggering undead is the Gun de Sol which shoots sunlight instead of bullets. To charge it up, you'll need to spend some time outside, banking daylight.

Since your ammo is so rationed, the game isn't a bullet fest. Stealth is the key, and you can knock on walls to distract enemies, or stun them from behind. Block and switch puzzles lurk in every dungeon, guarding the blood-sucking boss who lives there. Once found, you have to drag them – and yourself – out into the daylight for a showdown.

Don't be misled by the dungeons and chests – this isn't an RPG. There's no levelling up or chatting to villagers. Instead your performance in each dungeon is ranked according to how fast and stealthily you completed it.

The light chip isn't a gimmick – it works perfectly, and the game only forces you outside now and again. There's still plenty of late-night exploring to be done. Old style GBA owners may find it a bit easier to catch some rays, however, since the cart sticks out the gloomy bottom of the SP.

MARGARET ROBERTSON

> "Don't be misled by the dungeons and quests this is no RPG, and the light chip is no gimmick"

LOOK 'N' FEEL
Creepy dungeons and sun-drenched gardens make a stunning combination.

GAMEPLAY
You'll need a sharp brain and sneaky thumbs to beat all the dungeons.

LIFESPAN
The New Game+ option means you'll be chasing S ranks for weeks.

DIFFICULTY
By the end, both the puzzles and the baddies get pretty mean.

ADVANCE OPINION
An inventive adventure that would have scored highly even without the light chip system. There's never been anything like it.

88%

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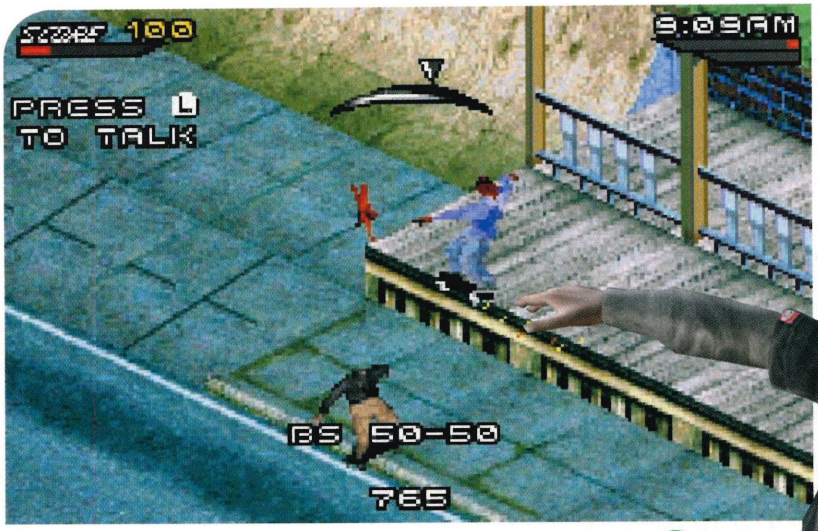
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★ In Story mode, you have to improve all your skills (except map reading, weirdly) to explore the whole map.

TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND

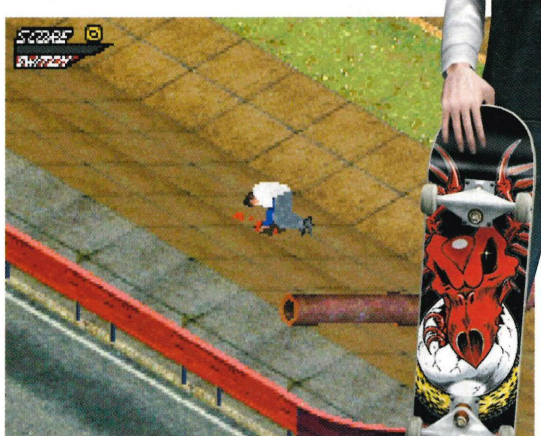
GAMEINFO

- **PUBLISHER** Activision
- **PHONE** 01753 756100
- **WEB** www.activision.co.uk
- **PRICE** £30
- **SAVE** To cart
- **LINK-UP** Yes
- **OUT** Now



Top Tip
Don't run before you can crawl. Practice tricks before linking them into complicated sequences.

★ Completely customise your little skating avatar, from gender to shirt colour.



★ Wiping out involves spilling more blood than a serial killer convention.



Leave the hectic grind of school or work for the far more entertaining hectic grind of the mean skateboarding streets. *Tony Hawk's* is all about building both skills and reputation, mastering a huge range of high-octane skateboarding tricks and learning the lay of several distinct lands, in an attempt to match your heroes. Hopefully, that means *Tony Hawk*, because it'll take a lot of skating to match Superman.

Tony Hawk's is a frustrating game, in the best possible way. For the first few minutes, the sight of a collapsing skater will burn itself into your very retina, with blood splashing across hot tarmac the closest you'll get to the bleeding edge of skateboarding. You begin slowly, gingerly jumping and grinding on walls, desperately hammering the direction buttons to keep your balance even as your polygonal skater breaks the light-speed barrier, before kicking away to perform the flips and tricks that the series does so well. By gradually building up your skill, you unlock new areas – complete with their own props to discover and grind – and missions that take you from your back yard to the back of beyond. Any levels that you unlock in the Story mode are made available for the freeform Arcade/Free Skate modes, where you can simply hunt for tricks without having to go through the motions. Pulling off tricks is exceptionally satisfying, and there's plenty of chance to show-off to friends with the Link-Up and Hotseat modes. Once you've settled in, *THUG* proves one of the GBA's funkiest titles. **RICH COBBETT**

> "To begin with, the sight of a collapsing skater will burn itself into your very retina..."

LOOK 'N' FEEL
Splendid visuals, and extremely fluid controls. Who's a pretty *THUG*, then?

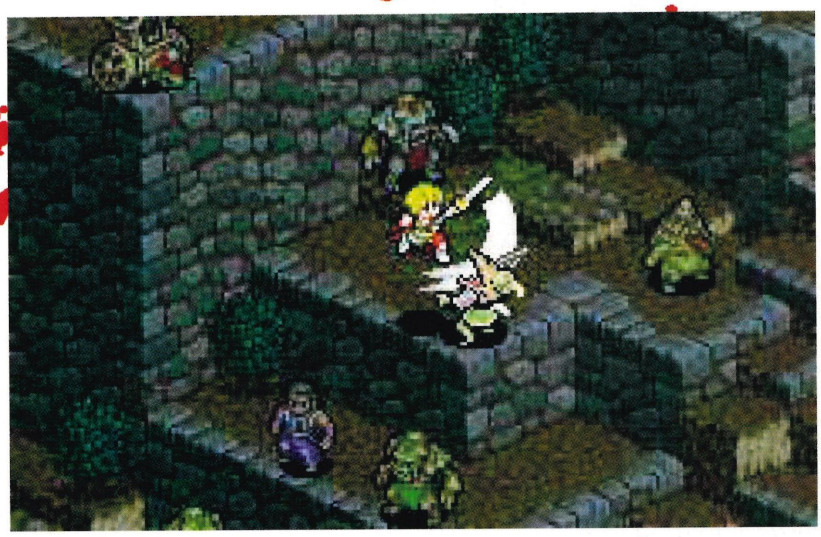
GAMEPLAY
Fairly restrictive for a while, but soon opens up. Let's call it, 'rewarding.'

LIFESPAN
Decent, although you have to be persistently willing to find tricks.

DIFFICULTY
Requires good timing from the off, but just about manageable.

ADVANCE OPINION
Smooth as silk and funky as a monkey in a sugared banana factory. Skating so simple, even we can do it.

89%





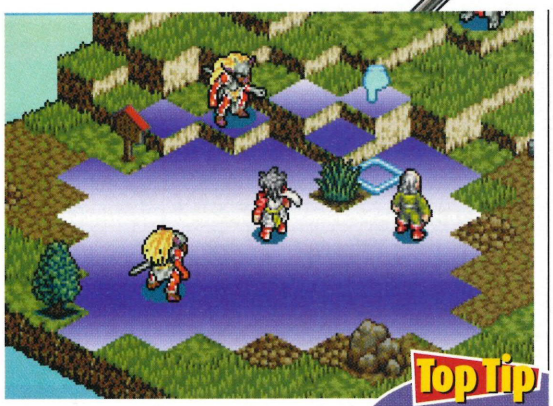
ONIMUSHA TACTICS

GAMEINFO

- **PUBLISHER** Capcom
- **PHONE** 0208 8462550
- **WEB** www.capcom-europe.com
- **PRICE** £30
- **SAVE** To cart
- **LINK-UP** No
- **OUT** Now

"This could well be the best thing to hit the GBA since *Advance Wars*"





Top Tip
A good way to keep the damage levels up is to constantly enhance Onimaru's Spirit Sword with soul-energy.



★ **Ultra powerful attacks have area-devastating power. Like the morning after a good curry.**

Sucking the souls from the dead to feed your power may not sound like a pleasant Sunday afternoon activity, but take it from us, it's just the ticket. Following in the footsteps of *Front Mission 3*, *Vandal Hearts* and *Final Fantasy Tactics*, *Onimusha Tactics* is turn-based combat gone supernatural.

As Onimaru, you must lead a growing band of warriors against the legions of the Genma – the Japanese word for demons. There's a touch of the RPG about it too, as your warriors go up levels as they fight, and collect increasingly powerful weapons and armour from the bodies of fallen enemies. Moreover, as you slay demons and grab their soul-crystals, you can begin to upgrade the damage your weapons deal, and learn new, high-damage combat skills. Onimaru's 'Shock' skill is one such ability – it affects a block of five squares, and so can damage multiple Genma.

There's something utterly compelling about the turn-based nature of the game, and it's appealing in a similar way to *Advance Wars*. However, with the RPG element factored in, there's more of a feeling of growth and progression involved. It's nice to have the luxury of time when you're considering which swordsman you're going to attack with, or which spells you're going to cast, and the interplay of different attack types (ranged, close combat and spells) gives you free reign when it comes to tackling missions.

In short, it's a real cracker. Plus, there are two save-slots in the game-pak, so you can always have a mid-mission save, and a backup start-of-mission save for when things go pear-shaped. And they will from time to time, as you'll face some righteously tough baddies and bosses. The best thing since *Advance Wars*? Quite possibly. We recommend that you grab a copy, and see for yourself. **AL BICKHAM**

LOOK 'N' FEEL
Beautifully crisp and detailed from start to finish.

GAMEPLAY
A tactical challenge, with loads of RPG upgrading thrown in.

LIFESPAN
There are loads of missions, but you'll want to tear through it.

DIFFICULTY
Tricky in places, but on the whole, it's a manageable challenge.

ADVANCE OPINION
Along with *Advance Wars 2*, it's the only strategy game out there worth owning. A miniature marvel, and a pleasure to play.

92%



CRASH NITRO KART

GAMEINFO

- **PUBLISHER** Vivendi Universal
- **PHONE** 0118 920 9100
- **WEB** www.vugames.com
- **PRICE** £30
- **SAVE** On cart
- **LINK-UP** Yes
- **OUT** Now

The GBA never, ever fails to astound us. Behind that tiny, extra-cool exterior lies a digital heart capable of pumping the most extraordinary gaming blood into your hands. For the first time, a handheld console has been able to properly 'do' 3D gaming; and sure, while it may pale in comparison to the better-than-reality graphics produced by big brother Gamecube, in its own ant-that-lifts-fifty-times-its bodyweight way, the GBA is incredibly impressive.

Playing *Crash Nitro Kart* for the first time is a reminder (as if we needed any reminding) of just how good the GBA is. Crash and his pals – including purple dragon Pyro – are all present and correct in three chunky dimensions, and taking them for a spin over the multiple courses presented here is, at the very least, going to see you stroking your chin, nodding your head and murmuring, "Mmm, look at that, jolly nice indeed." Graphically, this is pretty darn good.



Yes, welcome to terra hub word. A bandicoot in a car is reassured by a floaty voodoo mask. The world's gone insane.

HOW TO... POWERSLIDE

Ah, powersliding, it's what makes the world go 'round. Or, at the very least, it's what makes it easier to win races in *Crash Nitro Kart*. As such, it's an essential skill to learn, so here we are, ready to elucidate you with visual aids. Just like school! But cooler.



It's best to begin powersliding on wide, sweeping corners. Certainly, they make life easier for the novice. Anyway, once you've fastened your seatbelt, and are sitting comfortably, begin by hitting the R button...



...And you're vehicle will hop, and start powersliding. Now, take your finger – or thumb – off the accelerator, and pay attention to the little meter that pops up by your charge's side. Here, it's pictured green.



The more you powerslide, the more the green-o-meter will become red. When the green-o-meter finally becomes all the way red, it's time to take your finger off the R button. The fireworks are about to begin...



...Now, hit the accelerator again. Hey presto! You should now boost off like a bandicoot in a go kart who's just hit boosts. If you're really clever you can try and chain several boosts together. Sadly, we're not...



Inferno Island, not an ironic name for the UK, but an area of land covered in flame. Surprisingly.



Practising linking together boosts in the hub world is the videogame equivelent of a boy racer doing laps around the one-way system of a small town. If you can bare the shame it is worth doing, though.

Obviously, this is a karting game, so the order of the day is powersliding your way around tracks, pelting the opposition with power-ups, and hopefully, winning races. Of course, there's a story behind the proceedings, and it's a pretty far-fetched excuse to get a load of furry muppets together to race. Basically, pudding-faced intergalactic despot, Velo, has kidnapped Crash and chums as entertainment for his – wait for it – 'Galactic Circus'. Only by winning races and completing the game will you be granted your freedom. Happens every day.

Top Tip

If you get hit by TNT, hop repeatedly with the R button to shake it off before it explodes in your furry face.

What this boils down to is an Adventure Mode for the single player, a little like the one seen in the N64's *Diddy Kong Racing*. There's a number of worlds in the game (which are traditionally themed) and each of them has a hub. You're free to pootle around this hub and enter the races that are dotted around. Complete all the races in a given world and you can move onto the next. Simple, eh? Not exactly.

Certain races have certain requirements, so for example, you might need a couple of gold cups to enter a race, or a special key, or a coin, which in turn can only be earned through completing certain other races. So while there's an amount of leeway in how you go about getting further through the game, in the end you're going to have win every race to finish it. And that's going to take a while.

There's also a more familiar single-player arcade Cup Championship and Time Trial options, without any of the more involved elements of the Adventure Mode. Time Trial is especially good, as the handling of the karts in *Crash Nitro Kart* is spot-on, enabling you to pick out the perfect racing

> "Playing *Crash Nitro Kart* is a reminder of how very good the GBA actually is..."



That mini-explosion is caused by your Kart's nitro acceleration power. As safety features go, we've seen better.



Though ice world is treacherous, go faster strips are placed everywhere. That's the kind of racing chaos we admire.



Crash Nitro Kart has as many crates as his platform outings. Which will please crate fans, we'd wager. We find it all quite annoying, though. Can't developers think of something better?

line with skill and aplomb. Indeed, there's a certain amount of subtlety to the game in this respect, as it's possible to earn boosts through powersliding. Basically, when you enter a powerslide – by pressing R – your kart will hop and a little meter will pop up on-screen (it's also important that, as you start powersliding, you stop accelerating). As you powerslide a needle will move up the meter – when it hits the red zone, hit the gas again and you'll be awarded a boost. Hurrah! And the best thing is that, if you're possessed of nimble fingers, you can wangle several boosts out of a single, sweeping powerslide. Very nice indeed, although this is, of course,



You can play as the bad guys in *Nitro Kart* too. Who could resist the bald head of N-Cortex? Most people.

"Is *Nitro Kart* good enough to dish out driving lessons to Mario, the kart racing master?"



The cities of the future look an awful lot like Birmingham to us. Wonder if the accent's the same.



Starts are full of shunting, violence and unsporting conduct. Until we get to the front, anyway.



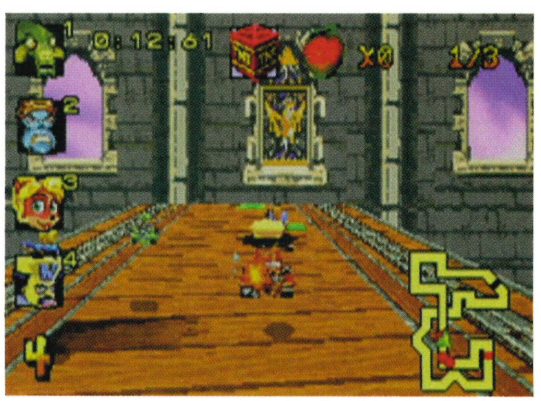
Finding the best racing line is tricky. So we've decided to follow the, er, line down the middle of the road.

incredibly tricky, and getting your fingers to do the complicated things your brain is telling them to do is easier said than done. Couple this with the boost strips which are plentifully dotted around each track and it's perfectly possible to boost almost all the time, which, we guess, is where the 'nitro' part of *Crash Nitro Kart* comes in.

There's also some nice link-up action going. Get some mates with their own copies of the game 'round and you can challenge each other to races. There's also a Battle mode and the option to take on a championship together, which is great fun.

But it's not all wine and roses. While *Crash Nitro Kart* does a lot of things very well, to become an essential Advance purchase it's going to have to trounce *Mario Kart*. Is *Nitro Kart* good enough to dish out driving lessons to the master? Well, it's a close run thing, and it depends on the first instance whether you prefer the grinning Bandicoot to the famous fatso plumber.

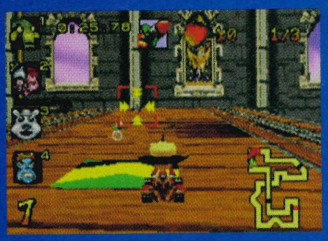
While that's a matter of individual taste, where *Crash Nitro Kart* does lose ground to Mario and pals is in variety of tracks. The difficulty of the races in *Crash Nitro Kart* is also less consistent than in Nintendo's benchmark racer.



The thrill of the open road. It's just like the M25 but without any other cars. So not like the M25.

I'VE GOT THE POWER (UP)

Where would any self-respecting kart game be without power-ups? Nowhere, that's where. So like any other karting game ever made, there's plenty of wild 'n wacky power-ups in *Crash Nitro Kart*. Let's have a look at some of 'em, eh?



★ Ah, the humble rocket. A great way of eliminating the opposition. A lock-on is represented by a honking great reticule. Or red square.



★ This green bubble is, as you'd expect, a shield. But it also crumps anyone that hits it, and can be fired off like a rocket. Handy.



★ The whirlwind can be sent ahead of you which basically thumps everyone out the way. Perfect, if you're driving 'tactically' at the back-of-the-pack.



★ This stopwatch slows everyone else down, happily. They appear all squashed, for some reason. Still, this is one of the most useful power-ups.



★ Follow the yellow brick road to victory. (Turn left at the lights for the chip shop).



★ It's a race against time and also a race against other cars. Like the human condition, we'd venture.



★ Getting stuck behind stragglers is no fun. 'Specially when you're a straggler.



★ Apparently, Velo is putting together a galactic circus... Freak show would perhaps be a more accurate description.

Also, there's simply *more* to *Mario Kart* – think of all the SNES *Super Mario Kart* tracks in the game, for example. And *Mario Kart* even lets you play link-up games with just one cartridge – something the bandicoot can't offer.

So while *Crash Nitro Kart* is actually a very good game (and it mimics its GC-based cousin extremely well), it's ultimately impossible to recommend this over *Mario Kart: Super Circuit* (which even has its own 'secret corner turbo', for instance).

On the other hand, if you've already exhausted *Mario Kart* and long for a new challenge, or are a Crash fanatic who wants to get more out of the Gamecube version of *Crash Nitro Kart*, then this comes wholeheartedly recommended. From now on, *Crash*, will be known as the GBA's 'other' karting racer. **JES BICKHAM**



★ That's right. If at first you don't succeed turn around in the middle of the track and drive backwards. A sure fire method of achieving racing glory. Really.

LOOK 'N' FEEL
Does 3D very well and handles tightly, just like it should.

LIFESPAN
Adventure Mode and the multiplayer options will keep you going.

GAMEPLAY
A tidy little karter and no mistake, with power-ups and plenty of speed.

DIFFICULTY
You'll need to come first in every race, so it can be tricky.

ADVANCE OPINION
Does what it does, but it's shaded out of the championship by the inconceivably brilliant *Mario Kart: Super Circuit*.

86%

THE MOST UNREALISTIC RACING GAME EVER.



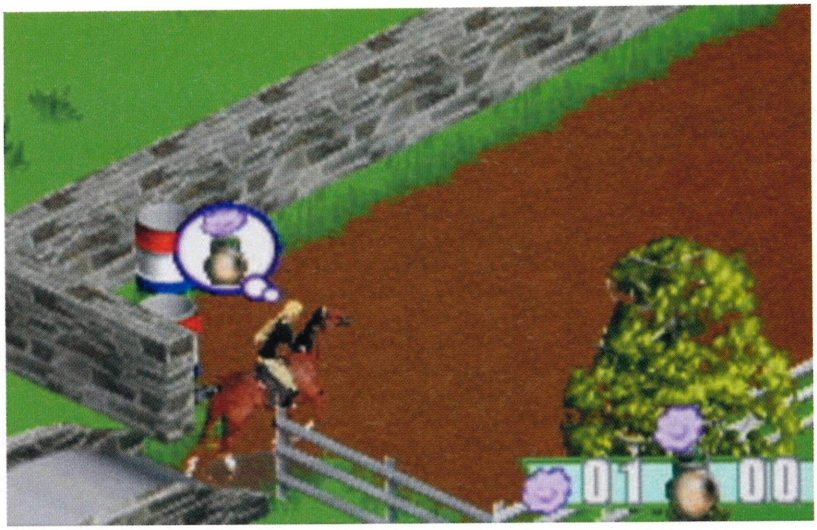
Heavily armed renegade racing on 29 interplanetary tracks.

ROCK 'N ROLL RACING™

The Blizzard classic. Now on Nintendo Game Boy® Advance.

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BLIZZARD ENTERTAINMENT CLASSIC ARCADE





The horseshoe stops exactly when you tell it to. Unless you don't know what a straight line is, you'll get a perfect score every time.

BARBIE HORSE ADVENTURES

GAMEINFO

- **PUBLISHER** Vivendi Universal
- **PHONE** 01189 209100
- **WEB** www.vugames.com
- **PRICE** £25
- **SAVE** Password
- **LINK-UP** No
- **OUT** Now



Top Tip
Collecting all the 'Barbie' letters resets the timer. If you do it, the courses are easy – and if you don't, they're impossible. Hmm.



We're sure there're hidden nurses uniforms in there somewhere – unfortunately, all we've unlocked are jodhpurs.

"A battle to get to the end before you stop caring or blood starts coming out of your eyes..."

After playing *Barbie Horse Adventures*, the first thing we did was look up 'race' in the dictionary. Then we looked up 'adventures'. Then 'horse.' And then, because we were bored, we looked up 'arse.' Unfortunately, the last one wasn't in there – which was a shame, because it's a better description of this game than any of the words in the title.

See, in Barbie's magical kingdom, a 'race' is what happens when you ride a horse past some pink oil drums with no other horses around, and an 'adventure' is deciding which shirt goes best with your new beige riding-pants. In fact, exactly half of the levels don't even qualify for either of those statements, because they don't have a time limit – it's just a battle to get to the end before you stop caring or blood starts coming out of your eyes.

In Barbie-land, you win 'races' by collecting coins on your way around a track within a time limit. It seems tough, because Barbie gets time-penalties for trampling geese with her horse or getting her head smashed open by falling boulders. Also, the programmers have perfectly recreated the feel of controlling a real horse by making sure that the horse (and, sometimes, Barbie) completely ignore whichever of the buttons it is that you're pressing. Fortunately, neither of these things matters, because the horse moves so slowly that even when you're only a few feet from a fence, you've got enough time to pull a pretend frightened face, have a swig of tea and *still* clear it with seconds to spare.

Whatever, Barbie's in need of a serious gameplay botox. There are lots of games out there specially created to fool well-intentioned relatives, but as granny-trickers go, this might as well be knocking on doors with a fake gasman's ID card. We like it not. **JOEL SNAPE**

LOOK 'N' FEEL
Looks like a six-year-old's colouring book – handles like a horse with no legs.

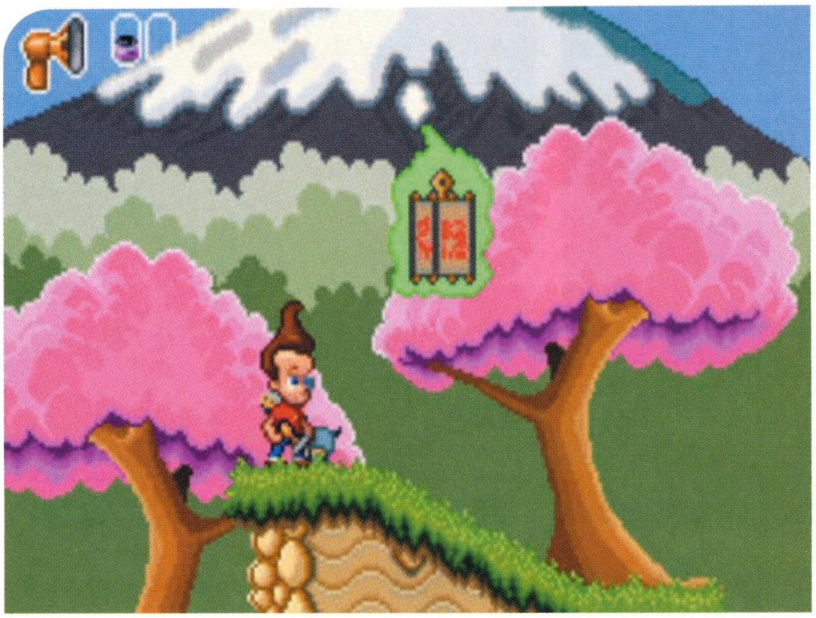
LIFESPAN
Forty minutes. Forty-two if you get excited by dressing Barbie up.

GAMEPLAY
Nobody on ADVANCE has ridden a horse, and we could go faster than Barbie.

DIFFICULTY
As easy as not falling asleep or hurtling the GBA through a window.

ADVANCE OPINION
Twice as embarrassing as taking a Barbie and a pair of coconuts out in public and making 'clip-clop' noises everywhere you go.

08%





No wonder the poor fish looks so ill, stuck on the roof, no water for miles.

JIMMY NEUTRON JET FUSION

GAMEINFO

- **PUBLISHER** THQ
- **PHONE** 01483 767656
- **WEB** www.thq.co.uk
- **PRICE** £20
- **SAVE** Password
- **LINK-UP** No
- **OUT** Out now

It now appears to be obligatory for any Nickelodeon TV show to be released as a videogame across all formats. If it's on the telly, then it has to be in your machine, no matter how little effort or relevance is put in.

Jet Fusion could not be a more obvious or average side-scrolling platform game. It manages to involve absolutely nothing that is unique, original, or innovative, and instead trawls out the same old tired ideas for what appears to go on forever. It beggars belief that after three games in the series, this is the best developers Helixe could do.

Top Tip
The bubbles containing bonuses can be bounced on, if you're quick, to reach very useful secret extras hidden above.

The title refers to Jimmy's favourite spy hero, *Jet Fusion*, about whom he is meant to have written a book report. But instead, being Jimmy Neutron, he has invented a dodgy machine to do it for him – one that causes the whole of Retroville to be turned into a fantasy Asian world, full of ninjas and, well, other ninjas. Fusion is in trouble, and it's Jimmy's job to rescue him, and restore his hero's world back to normal.

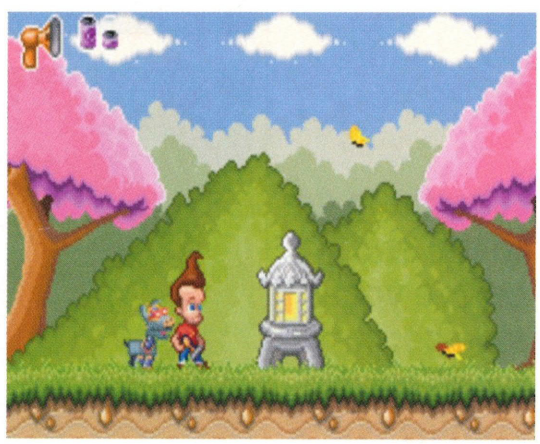
But this is only achieved by jogging along and shooting at the painfully repetitive enemies (only about five distinctly different types for each of the five 'worlds'). At one point you receive something that means you can jump a bit further, or a slightly more powerful gun, but nothing that will wake you up from your inevitable slumber. We often complain that *MegaMan* has had its day. *Neutron* makes it seem like *Medal Of Honor*. Each section of *Jet Fusion* is made up of what appears to be the same level over and over again, with barely any variation.

It doesn't necessarily do anything wrong, but it certainly doesn't do anything interesting. JOHN WALKER

> "*Jet Fusion* could not be a more obvious or more average side-scrolling platformer..."



The first mini-game is ridiculously hard, and entirely random, and a pain in the bum.



Just an ordinary day with your metal dog and dangerous quiff. In a minute, the day's tedious platforming will begin.

LOOK 'N' FEEL
The cartoony world is cartoony enough, but nothing exciting.

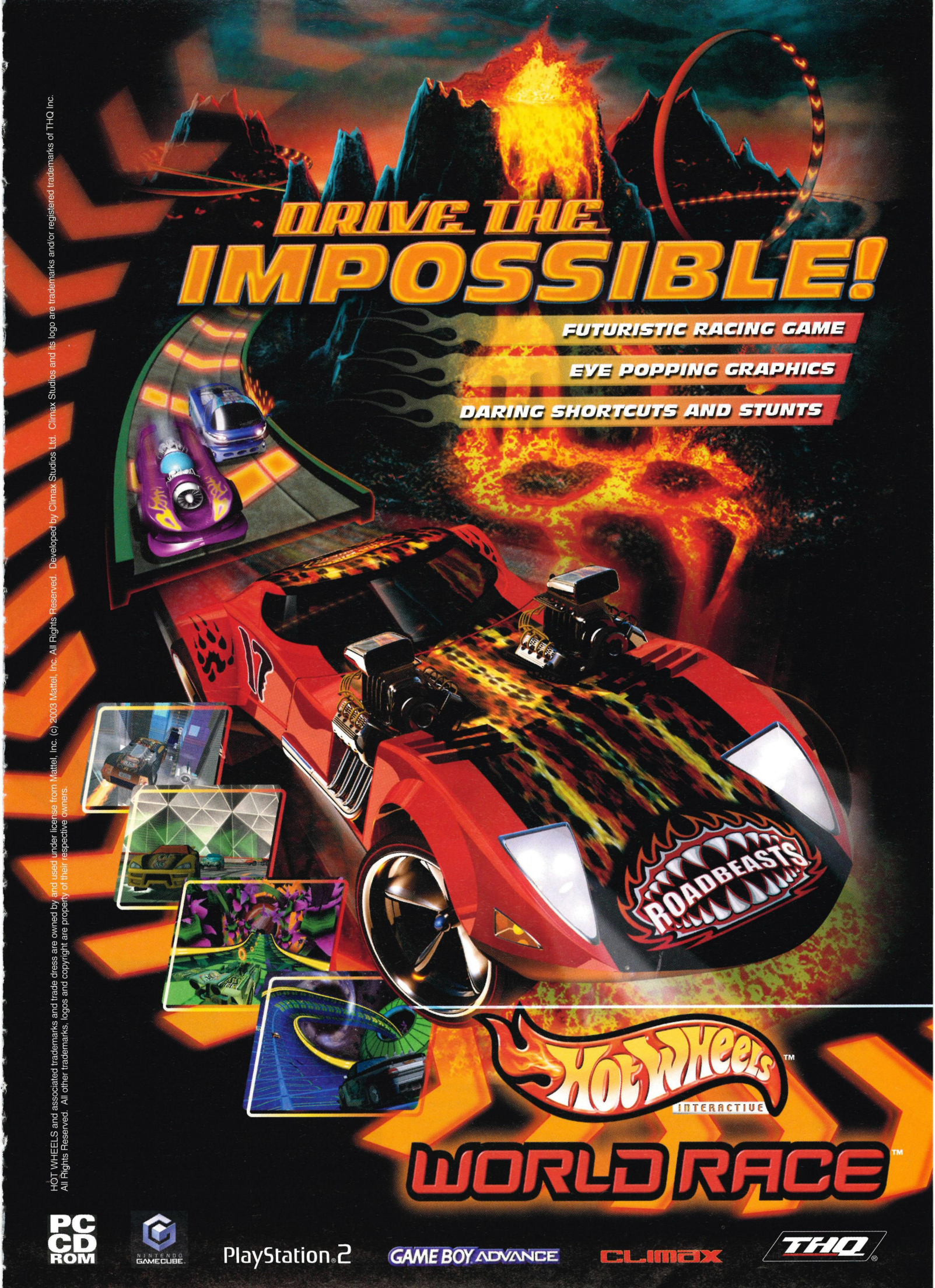
LIFESPAN
For once, a game that's too long. The lack of variation means you get bored.

GAMEPLAY
Dull, dull, and then some dull. Not an original idea or concept to be found.

DIFFICULTY
Fairly standard throughout, with a couple of tricky sections.

ADVANCE OPINION
The generic platform game sausage machine squeezes out yet another low-on-meat, high-in-fat porker. Average.

54%



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You'll have to adventure far and wide to get anywhere in *The Lost Age*. If only, we could just take the plane like everyone else.



Merman has been stunned. What, has he won the lottery or a date with J-Lo, or something?



GOLDEN SUN: THE LOST AGE

GAMEINFO

- **PUBLISHER** Nintendo
- **PHONE** 01932 895390
- **WEB** www.nintendo.co. uk
- **PRICE** £30
- **SAVE** To cart
- **LINK-UP** No
- **OUT** Now

The original *Golden Sun* was a landmark title for the GBA. Amidst grumblings about the number of ports and sequels on the machine, it provided an entirely original RPG with stunning graphics, an epic plot and – in the collectable Djinn creatures – a distinctive gameplay tang. It was a classic, traditional RPG, but it was essentially only half a game, plot-wise – this is the second half.

As the story goes, Alchemy is the power behind the whole of human civilization. Of course, in this game, Alchemy is pretty much just another name for magic – no philosopher's stone, lead-into-gold shenanigans. Anyway, all this power corrupted the Alchemists, so four elemental lighthouses were constructed to seal the power of Alchemy away for good. You manage to light two of the four lighthouses in the first game, but then it rather abruptly ended. Time to finish what you started.



Before the arrival of the *Changing Rooms* crew, this little fella lived in a lounge with a nice snug open fire.

DJINN WITH A CHANCE

A lot of your time will be spent fiddling with small creatures . They are pivotal to winning battles and solving puzzles, so treat them well! Mostly you have to find them, chase them down, and defeat them in battle before they will join your team, but on rare occasions they will cheerfully sign up of their own accord.



★ **Here we have a frisky Venus Djinn (that's Earth Elemental) putting up a bit of a fight. Use opposite elemental attacks to hit him hard.**



★ **Ah, Plasma, how we love thee. All made possible by equipping the appropriate Djinn, of course. Gotta catch 'em all! Or something.**



★ **Just look at that! We can't get enough Enormous Fiery Swords Of Doom, especially when they look as pretty as that. Take it, Mars Djinn!**



★ **Not all Psynergy (magic) is combat oriented. You can manipulate objects in towns, and dungeons, etc, even making puddles freeze and so on.**

Indeed, the people who will get most from this game are those who have played and completed the first adventure – which ended rather irritatingly in the middle of things, the words 'To Be Continued...' suddenly flashing up on your GBA screen. Anyway, by entering the password given to you at the end of the original adventure you can transfer data across from the first game, and hence instantly feel a lot less frustrated with the first installment of *Golden Sun* for cheating you out of a proper ending. In fact, completists take note: doing so is the only way of finding absolutely all the Djinn in *The Lost Age*.

The Djinn are what make *The Lost Age* stand out from the usual RPG crowd. They are little impish, some would say Pokemon derived, creatures of elemental persuasion (Earth, Air, Fire, Water), and equipping one to your character gives them a class, stat boosts, and certain magical powers. Some Djinn they can use in combat, some out of it – for solving puzzles, mainly. The clever bit is when you equip two Djinn, then three, then four. If they are all Fire, for example, expect some kick arse offensive spells like Flare Storm and Scramble Beam. However, mix them up a little and brand new classes become available, with even more outlandish spells and abilities. That's pretty cool already, but what's even better is that you can also use Djinn to summon huge great monsters in a battle – the more Djinn of the same type, the more impressive the summon. Cunningly, this knocks them out temporarily, so you lose your class bonuses. It adds a fun strategic element, and the graphical effects during the fights are well worth seeing too.

Top Tip

Use the Mind Read ability on every single living thing you see, ever. Often valuable clues will be revealed.



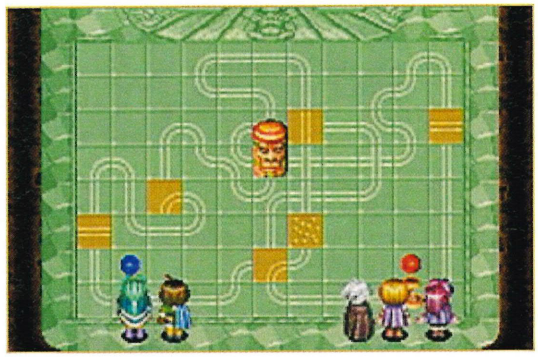
★ **Mars Djinn takes 36 damage and a few nasty burns we should think. Do you think Savlon will work on an Earth elemental?**



★ ***Golden Sun 2*, just like the first game but with a proper ending this time. Hurrah.**

The Lost Age is essentially not very different to *Golden Sun*. It's a continuation, rather than an evolution. There are minor differences, like having to find Summon Tablets to access some summon spells, but *Golden Sun* players will feel immediately at home. For example, you can still use Mind Read on all the villagers, which is, as ever, genius.

The only serious accusation that could be levelled at The *Lost Age* is a lack of new features, and we can't really bring ourselves to criticise a game too severely for simply continuing on from a deeply enjoyable, immersive RPG. It's got everything you could ask for – hidden Djinn to fight and find, sidequests, item forging, loads of equipment, heaps of spells, puzzles, non-random combat, the works. It's an essential purchase for fans of the first game, and unless you despise RPGs, you'll get a lot of pleasure from it. **TOM MAYO**



★ ***Golden Sun 2* is at the mature cutting-edge of GBA gaming and to prove it, there are some, er, playground sequences.**



★ **What do `have we here? A city on a bank? Smashing.**

> *The Lost Age* is very much a continuation of *Golden Sun* rather than an evolution...



LOOK 'N' FEEL
Colourful, detailed, with great lighting effects and music.

LIFESPAN
Even acolytes of the first game will spend a 'Lost Age' in *GS2*.

GAMEPLAY
Solid, intuitive RPG, that's difficult to put down.

DIFFICULTY
Some of the puzzles are brain-sprainers, but they're all fairly logical.

ADVANCE OPINION
A wonderful RPG with bags of personality, and a downright funky Djinn system. It's more of the same – but that's good.

91%





Sonic points the way to another bonus shot. Getting the ball to go where you want it to is a tricky business here.



If only the ball didn't play like it was made of rubber. It's supposed to be metal, Sega!

SONIC PINBALL PARTY

GAMEINFO

- **PUBLISHER** Sega/THQ
- **PHONE** 01483 767656
- **WEB** www.thq.co.uk
- **PRICE** £30
- **SAVE** To cart
- **LINK-UP** Yes
- **OUT** Now

It's ironic, given that videogames were widely credited with killing off real pinball, that the only place pinheads can easily get their silver ball fix these days is on a games console.

You could search for miles before you find a bar that still has a decent, working, pinball machine, but pop down to your local game store and you're likely to find almost as many pinball titles as there are golf games or flight sims. This latest GBA effort from Sega is fairly standard stuff, with three tables and a bunch of simple mini-games to keep you going and, of course, it bears little resemblance to real pinball. You start with two tables, based on *Sonic* and the Saturn golden oldie *NiGHTS*, plus there's a *Samba de Amigo* table to unlock.

All three work on the same basic principle of flipping the ball through loops and into targets and collecting bonuses by hitting creatures or objects littered around the playfield.



Roll over the little animals wandering around the in-lanes for points and Chao-related bonus goodness.

WIZARD MODE

With three large tables plus those multiplayer extras and the casino games, *Sonic Pinball Party* certainly matches up to the likes of *Pokemon Pinball* in terms of sheer size. Here's a taster of what you can expect to unearth in the game...



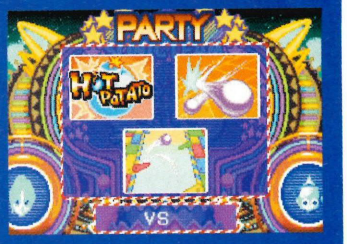
★ **The official Sonic Pinball world championships! Prove your mastery of the silver ball here and you can unlock the *Samba de Amigo* table.**



★ **Don't know how to play pinball? That doesn't matter, because there's a step-by-step guide to all the various shots and modes on each table.**



★ **They don't have games quite like this in Las Vegas. Just as well, because the casino owners would be out of business in a week. Very easy to win.**



★ **Fancy some multiplayer pinball? Connect up to four GBAs via the Party mode, and play away. You only need one cartridge too, which is a bonus.**

There are bonus modes, boss battles and some excellent artwork that changes according to how well you're playing, but one of the most fundamental aspects of real pinball has been forgotten.

Namely, that you're supposed to be playing with a whacking great steel ball on a solid wooden playfield. There's supposed to be a sense of weight and inertia that you can use to judge those difficult shots or perform expert tricks such as stopping the ball dead on a flipper, or passing it gently from one flipper to another.

That kind of thing is a little too difficult here because the ball is so lightweight, it ricochets around the table at an almighty pace. You'll rarely get it totally under control, meaning some of the more precise shots rely too much on luck than real skill. If you're used to games like *Pokemon Pinball* you'll know pretty much what to expect, but there's no denying that the ball in *Sonic Pinball Party* is particularly ping-pongish.

Top Tip

Unlike the real thing, you can't tilt these tables. So whenever you're in a sticky spot, hit the shoulder buttons to nudge it.

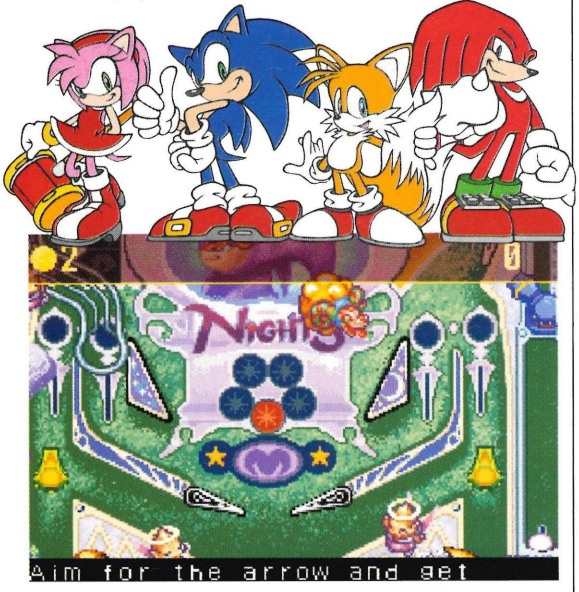
The *Party* bit comes in the form of three mini-games for up to four players. In Hockey, you try to hit the ball through the other players' flippers; Hot Potato is all about trying to get the balls to your opponent's side of the screen; and Ladder is a co-operative challenge in which you co-ordinate your efforts to knock the ball as far as possible up a very long table. None of the games are exactly brilliant, but they only require a single cartridge to play, which is commendable.

On top of all that, there are some simple casino games which involve hitting the balls at roulette wheels, fruit machines and the like. There's a Tiny Chao Garden for raising the Chao creatures you find in the main game, and a story mode that leads you through the tables via an unlikely tale of pinball rivalry.

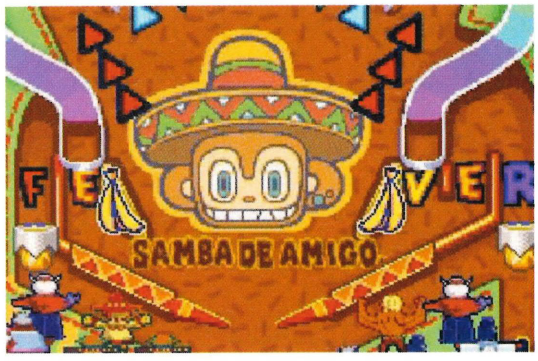
It's decent enough, and certainly more than a match for *Pokemon Pinball*. Sonic fans will certainly lap up all the Sega history on offer here. As pinball fans, we'd certainly like to see a real table based on this. **MARTIN KITTS**



★ **Press a flipper button at the start of the game to determine whether you start with a ball saver or a points bonus.**



★ **You'll have trouble reading the status display at the bottom of the screen, while the ball is flying around the table.**



★ **Based on the brilliant Dreamcast maraca rhythm game, this table is all about dust, dance, and jug-eared monkeys.**

> "*SPP* is mostly excellent, but there's one fundamental part of pinball missing..."

LOOK 'N' FEEL
Decent artwork that evokes the spirit of the original games.

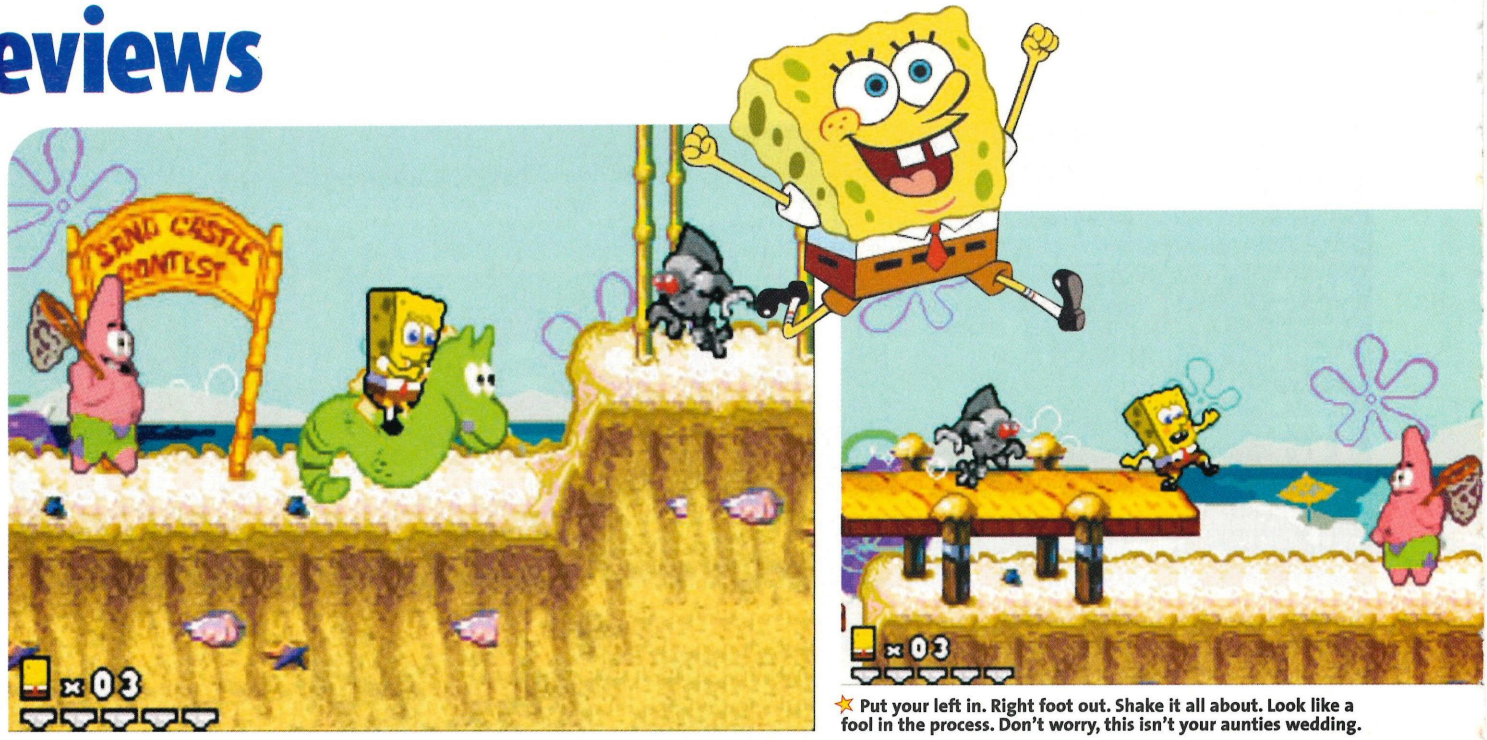
GAMEPLAY
Two flippers, up to three balls. Simple. really. No, simpler.

LIFESPAN
Definitely big enough to keep you playing for a few weeks.

DIFFICULTY
The flyaway ball makes it a bit tougher than it should be.

ADVANCE OPINION
A cart stashed with quality extras makes up for the lack of realistic ball physics. Definitely worth a flip or two.

83%

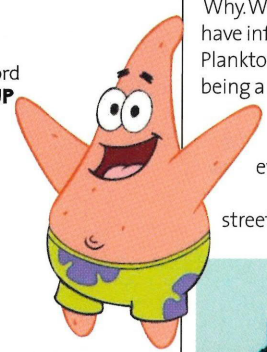


Put your left in. Right foot out. Shake it all about. Look like a fool in the process. Don't worry, this isn't your aunties wedding.

SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS: THE BATTLE FOR BIKINI BOTTOM

GAMEINFO

- **PUBLISHER** THQ
- **PHONE** 01483 767656
- **WEB** www.thq.co.uk
- **PRICE** £18
- **SAVE** Password
- **LINK-UP** No
- **OUT** Now



Sponges live in the sea. Remember that next time you're washing the car. A living thing died, just to wipe the dead flies from your number-plate.

Or in Nickelodeon's case, because they needed to wipe the flies from their *Ren & Stimpy* show.

Why. Why play with Spongebob? Robots have infested Bikini Bottom, after the evil Dr Plankton built an army of metal monsters, except of course, being a single-celled organism with no higher neural functions, he forgot to flip the switch marked 'Obey Dr Plankton', and now they're everywhere, and not even that hostile.

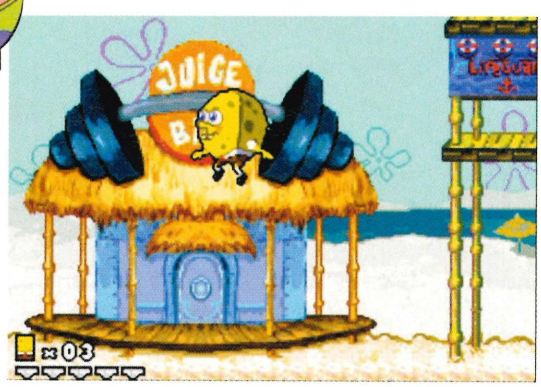
Top Tip
The key to a high score is scouring the levels for snacks. A healthy sponge needs burgers. But too much protein leads to gout...

Which is where everything starts. You roam the streets of Bikini Bottom, searching for a solution to the robotic menace. Rather than smashing them, you can bounce on their heads, lifting you high into the sky. When you're up there, you can suck up the metal menaces, inflating 'Bob's head, and enabling you to float your way gently down. It also helps when you're looking for extra points, distributed in the form of cheeseburgers, dotted throughout the town. You can also collect spare pairs of pants to grab a few more lives, and of course, *you always* need a spatula or three to get onto the next level. Don't ask us why. You just do.

But, it's not very entertaining. Spongebob is a pain to control, his animation is jerky and imprecise. The game doesn't have the imagination of the television series, it's a platform game built by-rote. Its stages are dull and having to collect spatulas before you leave every level is ridiculous.

But it does have bikini in the title. Six extra percent, just for that. TIM EDWARDS

"The game doesn't have nearly as much imagination as the TV series."



Expand your brain. Reach new heights. Don't buy this.



That crab's not going to get out the way... he's too shellfish.

LOOK 'N' FEEL
Animation is jerky, and the characters blocky. It's a disappointment.

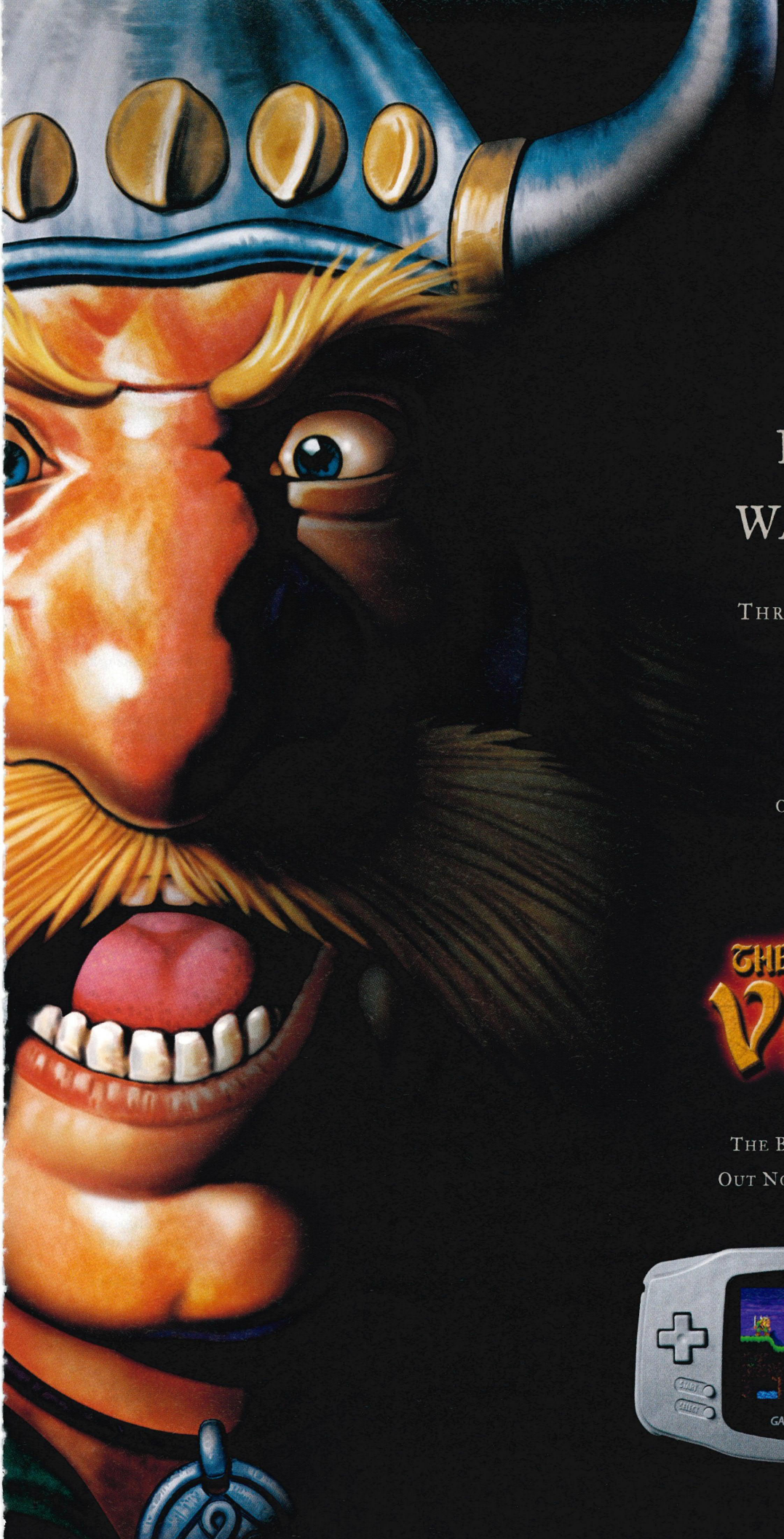
GAMEPLAY
Poor level design prevent Spongebob from ever achieving greatness.

LIFESPAN
Oddly, Spongebob can't even survive a quick dousing under the tap.

DIFFICULTY
Spongebob isn't hard at all. He's all soft and squidgy. Look elsewhere.

ADVANCE OPINION
You can squeeze all you like, but only tiny drops of entertainment will dribble from this. More of a brillo pad than a sponge.

46%



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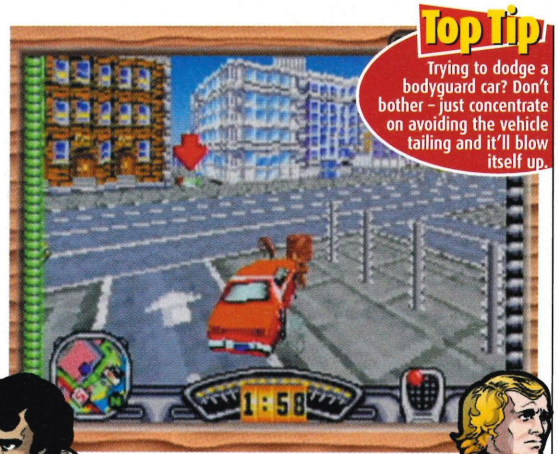


★ We can't put our finger on it, but there's something slightly suspicious about that blue car in front...

STARSKY AND HUTCH

GAMEINFO

- **PUBLISHER** Empire
- **PHONE** 020 83437337
- **WEB** www.empireinteractive.com
- **PRICE** £25
- **SAVE** Cart or password
- **LINK-UP** No
- **OUT** Now



Top Tip
Trying to dodge a bodyguard car? Don't bother – just concentrate on avoiding the vehicle tailing and it'll blow itself up.

★ *Starsky* is an unsatisfying *Driver* clone. Leave it on the kerb, baby



★ Police try in vain to fend of the attack of the giant green arrows...

One task in *Starsky and Hutch* involves stopping a robber from ramming his car into a petrol station because he's upset that there's nobody in it to rob. And if you're thinking that's child-eatingly crazy, you're right, but it still isn't as insane as the rest of your mission – you've got to stop this genius from flambeeing himself by getting your car in the way. Yet this isn't anywhere near the stupidest thing about *S&H*. Not by a Huggy Bear.

See, most of the game's based around chasing down crims and ramming or shooting them off the road. The problem is, if you take too much damage, your car's wrecked, and collisions with robbers, buildings, and pretty much everything else wreck your car. Lamp-posts wreck your car. Road signs wreck your car. Bollards – often handily placed in back alleys that you'd expect to be a shortcut – not only wreck your car, but have an invisible forcefield between them which, yes, wrecks your car. Red crates don't wreck your car, but grey ones do, and water wrecks your car so much you can't help suspect the programmers thought the blue bits of map were supposed to be electric napalm. Also, the criminals (even the crazy ones) are really good at swerving – so you end up not following them down the wrong alley. Meantime, the pop-up occasionally means that you can't tell there's a wall there until you smack into it. You'd think that'd make things difficult, and it sort of does, but the criminals can be pretty stupid as well – sometimes they'll crash into a wall and smack themselves senseless against it like a sparrow on a patio door, while you shoot them to bits. Not really a threat to society, then.

'You Are Wrecked!' announces the Game Over screen – and after two hours of this, you will be. **JOEL SNAPE**

LOOK 'N' FEEL
Cool graphics, great wakka-wakka sound, spoiled by masses of pop-up.

LIFESPAN
Plenty of minigames and cars to unlock, but success is random.

GAMEPLAY
Like a 'proper' driving game, except more annoying, and with dumber AI.

DIFFICULTY
Only difficult because of glitchy graphics – but still not that tough.

ADVANCE-OPINION
There are tons of games on the GBA that handle much better than this, even if they haven't got David Soul's snazzy perm.

55%



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Notice how the Scooby-mobile never gets caught in traffic. Now that's magic.

SCOOBY DOO! MYSTERY MAYHEM

GAMEINFO

- **PUBLISHER** THQ
- **PHONE** 01483 767656
- **WEB** www.thq.co.uk
- **PRICE** £30
- **SAVE** To cart
- **LINK-UP** No
- **OUT** Now

We should consider them failures. After seven long hard years of scouring the scariest, darkest, deepest recesses of the American mid-west, the Scooby team didn't find a single ghost. Not a haunted sausage. No zombies, no mutants, no headless poltergeists. They didn't even manage extra-sensory perception. But they did find plenty of property scams, mob business dealings, divorced men attempting to scare their wives out of rightful alimony payments, and a place in the zeitgeist. And now they've found their way into a game.

Following a call from Velma's librarian, the decrepit Mr Dinsdale, the Mystery Machine pulls up outside the Hambridge University library. There's a rumour floating around campus that the old halls are haunted by the most malevolent of spirits. It turns out that the rumours are true – it's crawling with them. They're everywhere, clanking their chains, popping out of the library trolleys, and crawling out of the walls.



There are all kinds of relics littering the corridors. Watch out for this one, straight out of the movies. Even the *Evil Dead* read.

SNEAK SCHOOL

The first skill you need to learn is the art of not disturbing the dead. Make the best use of both the environments and your tiptoes to make sure that when you do have to slip past them, the spooks remain silent, sleeping the sleep of the just. A restless spirit is a dangerous spirit. Remember that motto.



★ First, you need a pair of quiet shoes. Or paws. Well, whatever suits you best. Every species has its ghost in the bowl.



★ Quickly nip behind a pillar. These spooks aren't too clever. If you can keep to the shadows, then you've won the first round.



★ Quick! He's spotted you. Time to move. Do the patented Scooby and Shaggy dash, and you should be fine. For a while, anyway.



★ That was lucky. Time for a nice cup of tea and a sit down. Bugger. No tea. Only Scooby snacks. But they're oh-so-tasty.

Your anti-heroes for the adventure are Scooby and Shaggy. Whilst you're only in direct control of one of the pair, the other will happily tag along behind, following in your footsteps. You can tap select to swap between the two, exchanging places with a quick high five.

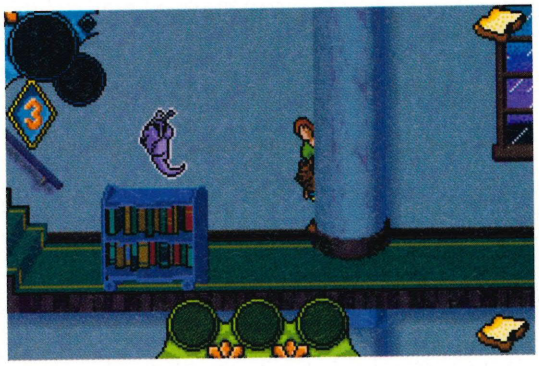
This double team provides most of the fun. Since you're directing two oafs with absolutely no sense of bravery, it's essential that you keep them out of the way of the ghosts. If you get touched by the dearly departed souls, you don't actually receive damage – instead, the leading partner gets 'scared'. He turns white as a sheet, and trembles a bit. You can even hear his knees knocking. If his partner is still feeling confident, having not come into contact with the 'other side', then life goes on as usual. But, if they're both scared, then they'll suddenly rush forward, at twice the speed, dashing from one end of the level to the other, barely under your control. It's a clever, clever way of emphasising the fragility of the pair, and it provides a few moments of entertainment, as you try and knock Scooby and Shaggy into the path of an oncoming spirit, just so you can dash across gaps in the floor.

Top Tip

On the first level, spot as many *Evil Dead* references as you can. Is that the *Book of the Dead* on the shelves of Hambridge?

But it's not all scaredy pants action. You're being sent around the university to search for clues: evidence that would stand up in front of a cross-examination in a court of law. Or at least in an episode of *Frost*.

On your way through the game, you also need to grab a bite to eat – there are plenty of Scooby snacks for those late night, post-club, munchie sessions, and, if you explore high and low, you'll find enough ingredients to build a sandwich. Sandwiches are game-currency: you can buy extra lives, art galleries and other bonuses with them.



★ Hiding behind a pillar will protect you from the spookiest spirits. Although these chaps aren't particularly scary.

It's not a typical platform game. *Scooby Doo! Mystery Mayhem* plays at a slower pace than most platformers, simply because of the fragility of Scooby and Shaggy. Indeed, to get anywhere, you must sneak past most of the spirits, hiding behind pillars before making a tiptoed dash when their backs are turned.

But it's too frustrating. Levels are designed illogically, and it's just too hard to get past some of the challenges. Too often you'll need to make blind jumps to get to the next section. The Scooby gang are no longer failures, they're just mediocre game students. **TIM EDWARDS**

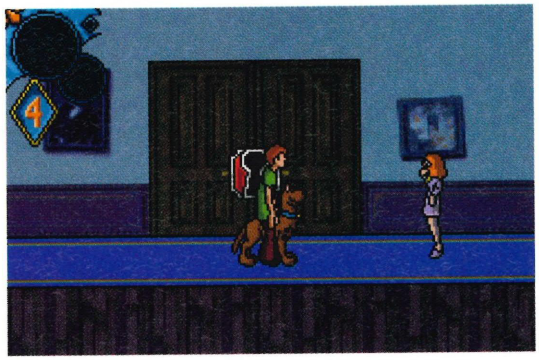


★ Don't tell us, it was some doddery old bloke under a big duvet. What a turn up.

> "You're directing two oafs with no sense of bravery, so avoid any ghosts..."



★ The poor, forsaken mutt will happily light the corridors for you, if you can find a lantern able to fit between his slack jaws.



★ Arghhh! It's the most disgusting deformed undead creature yet... No, hang on. It's just Velma. What a mistake to make.

LOOK 'N' FEEL
Perfect presentation. Animation is smooth and the sound effects funny.

GAMEPLAY
A sneaky platform invention: to be sneaky. Hiding from spooks is fun.

LIFESPAN
It's difficult. The question is, will it just make you want to throw your GB away?

DIFFICULTY
The main problem. Illogically spaced checkpoints make *Scooby* frustrating.

ADVANCE OPINION
A nice try, but rather than enjoying a rip-roaring, cartoon adventure, it too often feels like you're being punished. Scrappy.

65%



★ The guys in black used to be Androthi but like Anakin, they were seduced by the Dark Side. Death is the only suitable punishment.

BLACKTHORNE

GAMEINFO

- **PUBLISHER** Vivendi Universal
- **PHONE** 01189 209100
- **WEB** www.vugames.co.uk
- **PRICE** £20
- **SAVE** To cart
- **LINK-UP** No
- **OUT** Now

Blackthorne is certainly a curious name for the lead character of a videogame. You'd have to presume that the developers didn't realise that it's also a popular brand of cider, or perhaps they're planning on a series of follow-ups like 'Strongbowe' and 'Scrumpie Jacke'. Anyway, rather than being a wizened old tramp who's mission is to beg for small change and evade policemen by knocking them out with his apple-reeking breath, Blackthorne is a mighty warrior with a shotgun by his side and vengeance on his mind. Just to make a change, your task is to rid a land of evil creatures and culminates in a battle to the death with the despotic leader of the demonic hordes. Sigh.

The game is a combination of 'platforms and ladders' exploration, key collecting and combat. It's a pretty decent effort from the team who made *Diablo*, tricky enough to make for a proper challenge without being so hard that



★ You can get hold of various explosive devices, including Hover Bombs, Fire Bombs (pictured) and, er, Remote Wasps

'THORNE TO BE WILD

Our hero must travel a long and perilous road before he can avenge his enslaved people by destroying Sarloc. There are four areas to explore and each has around five levels to battle through. Here's an at-a-glance guide to what you can expect along the way...



★ Blackthorne begins his quest in the mines, which are mainly populated by weedy orcs. These grunts take only a few of hits before snuffing it...



★ Once you've made it above ground it's off to the forest. Blackthorne should be wearing a coat. He'll catch his death in that rain.



★ The next section of the game takes place in a sandy wilderness. See those shrubs at the bottom of the screen? They'll eat you if you stand on them.



★ Conquer the final level and you'll face big bad Sarloc. First, though, you'll have to find your way through the labryinth of his fortress.

you'll gnaw your own toes off in frustration. The levels are spooky and pleasantly detailed and the music and sound effects both help to add to the game's dark mood. Blackthorne is easy to control and has plenty of neat moves. He can walk, run, jump, grab onto ledges, duck, dodge bullets and best of all, nonchalantly shoot enemies with an over-the-shoulder shotgun blast without even turning his head. He's a humourless mother, is Blackthorne, even stepping into the scenery to avoid foes bullets.

We'd also better mention the game's plot because it's good for a giggle. Though the gameplay merits only a few pages of the manual, the story is allocated a massive 17 pages to explain how Blackthorne came to be fighting this one-man war. He's a renegade Special Forces operative who has been incarcerated by 'merciless United Nations commanders' for alleged war crimes. He makes good his escape, but then finds himself transported to another world, where he learns that he's actually the heir to the kingdom of the Androthi, who have been enslaved by a ruthless dark sorcerer called Sarlac. Jeez guys, we reckon you'd had one too many pints of scrumpy when you thought that one up.

Top Tip

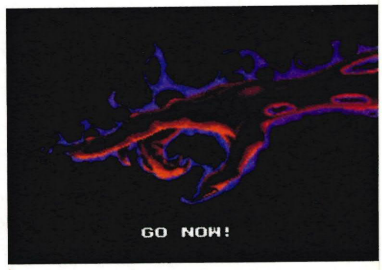
Never run in all guns blazing. Instead, hide in the shadows and duck out to loose off a volley. Sneaky, yes?

The Androthi are on hand to dish out useful advice and give you useful items as you make your way through the game and at certain points they'll give you upgrades for your shotgun. The game is divided into sections, with around four levels in each. You start out in the mines before moving to a forest, a rocky desert and on into Sarlac's fortress. Although they're all styled differently and contain increasingly tougher baddies, getting through each section is very similar. There's lots of searching for keys that will allow you to raise a bridge or unlock laser fields and the rest of the time is divided between trotting up, down and around trying to find the right path through a level and battling with the enemy. In many ways, *Blackthorne* suffers from the same problems as *Prince Of Persia*. Like Ubi's update of the Amiga classic, this faithful update of a SNES title is professionally put together... But lacks surprises. There's plenty of atmosphere, but not enough to hold the attention in the long term.

Blackthorne is well put together and the lead character is great, even though he looks like he should be in Aerosmith. There's plenty of stuff to do but it does get a bit samey. Worth a look if you're a fan of the genre and have already completed *Splinter Cell* and *CT Special Forces*. **NICK ELLIS**



★ Waterfalls provide you with the chance to wash Blackthorne's lovely flowing locks. Oh, and you might find a secret room too.

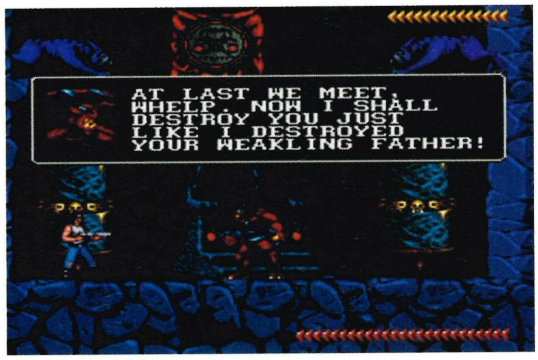


★ Go now! Go and cut those disgusting nails.

> "Blackthorne is a warrior with a shotgun by his side and vengeance on his mind..."



★ You'll never believe it, but the heart of Tuul is actually a roundabout in Norwich city centre.



★ Chatting to people gives you valuable clues. This chap is clearly informing you that he's about to rip your head off.

LOOK 'N' FEEL
Very much an old-school platform shooter – but it's stood the test of time.

GAMEPLAY
An intuitive control system and Blackthorne is a top character.

LIFESPAN
A few days of solid play and you'll have it licked.

DIFFICULTY
Quite straightforward if you're methodical and don't go charging in.

ADVANCE OPINION
A direct port of the old SNES game, *Blackthorne* is a respectable, if dry, adventure with an appealing blend of action and exploration.

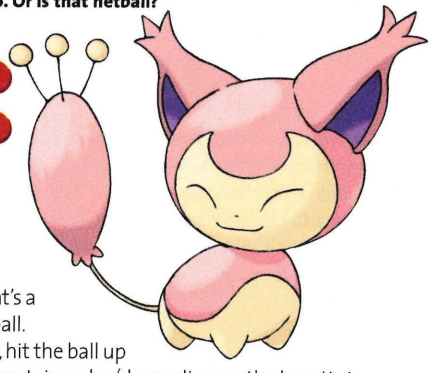
71%





★ Pinball, the England team's been on the slipperly slide to obscurity since 1966. Or is that netball?

POKÉMON PINBALL: RUBY & SAPPHIRE



GAMEINFO

- **PUBLISHER** Nintendo
- **PHONE** 020 73073103
- **WEB** www.nintendo.co.uk
- **PRICE** £35
- **SAVE** To cart
- **LINK-UP** No
- **OUT** Now



Caught 'em all yet? Probably not. And especially when new products filled with mountains of the pointy-toothed, balloon-bodied oddities keep getting made. Here's another to keep you hunting, but this time, you have to search through the majesty of pinball.

This is the sequel to *Pokémon Pinball* on the Game Boy Color, and whereas the GBC version enabled you to catch beasties from *Red/Blue*, the GBA game puts you on the tail of Pokémon that appear in *Pokémon Ruby/Sapphire*. That's a bumper lot of pinball.

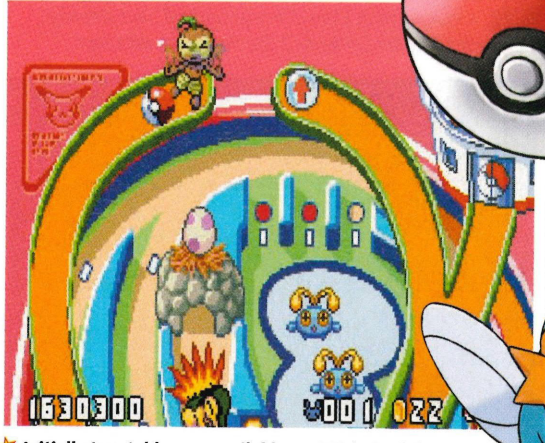
Top Tip
Get used to rescuing balls that have plopped into an out lane by lifting one flipper and knocking the ball back into the game.

It works like this, hit the ball up various ramps in a certain order (depending on the beastie in question) and then when the Pokémon is released you have to smack your ball into it a few times to claim it as your own. There are two tables on offer, both bursting with mini-games boss battles and challenges galore.

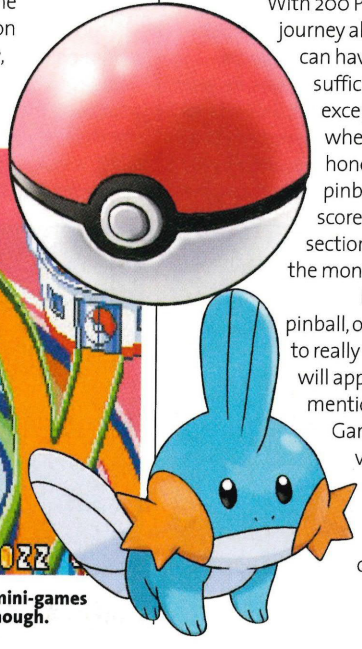
With 200 Pokémon to catch, there is a long journey ahead, indeed, perhaps too long. There can have been few gamers out there with sufficient patience to master the exceptionally tricky GBC title. Especially when reward comes mainly in the time-honoured – but hardly cutting-edge – pinball tradition of advancing up the high score table. Although there is a Pokédex section, so you can clock some basic stats on the monsters you've captured.

If you really like Pokémon, or really like pinball, or indeed, if you are fortunate enough to really like both, then it's a fairly safe bet this will appeal. A smart feature we should mention is being able to hook it up to a GameCube controller to coax some vaguely more realistic rumbling pinballery. This is GBA Pinball at it's very best, but even with all the Poké-related add-ons, still someway short of a must have-title. **STEPHEN PIERCE**

> "With 200 Pokémon to catch there's a long journey ahead, indeed, perhaps too long..."



★ Initially two tables are available on *R/S*, but mini-games and extra tables can be opened up. No chairs, though.



LOOK 'N' FEEL
Wishy-washy colours inform the fun looking tables.

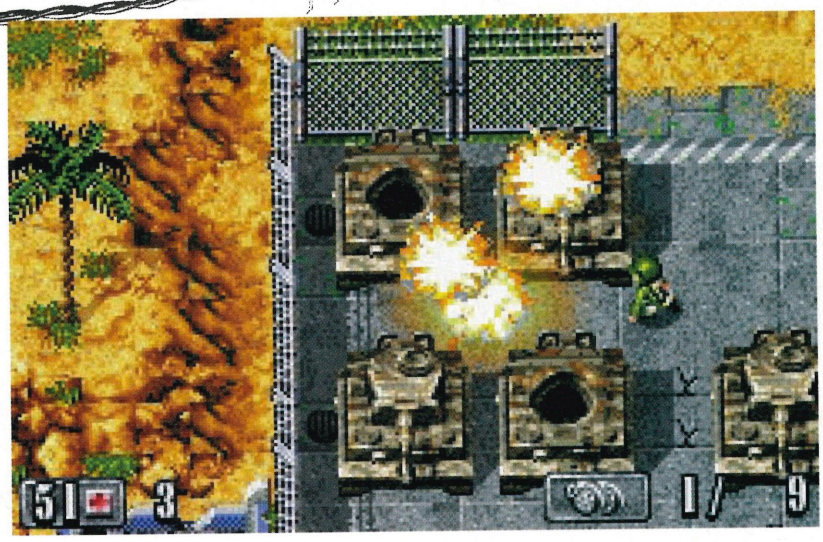
GAMEPLAY
Well, you know – it's like pinball and stuff. And some mini-games.

LIFESPAN
A lot of monsters to grab, but have you got the stamina?

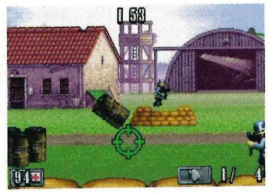
DIFFICULTY
Not that tough, although it can feel rather random.

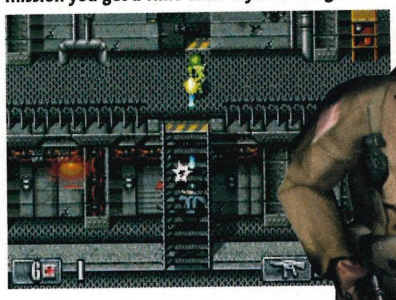
ADVANCE OPINION
You'll know if you're interested in this game just by reading the title. It's not a world shatterer, but it does what it purports to.

82%









Just like in a real war, at the end of every mission you get a *Time Crisis*-style bonus game.

MEDAL OF HONOR INFILTRATOR

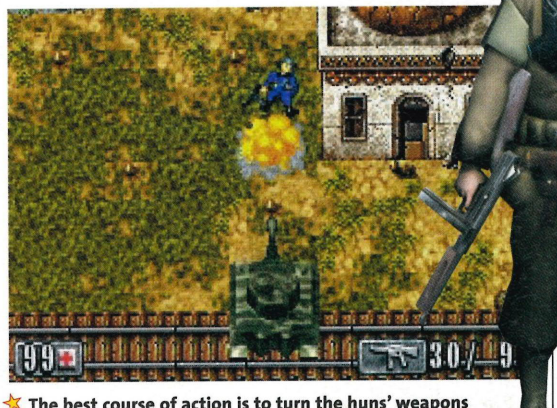




GAMEINFO

- **PUBLISHER** EA
- **PHONE** 01932 450000
- **WEB** www.uk.ea.com
- **PRICE** £35
- **SAVE** To cart
- **LINK-UP** Yes
- **OUT** Now





The best course of action is to turn the huns' weapons against them. Tanks, gun emplacements, sauerkraut...

"There's plenty of brainless blasters on the GBA but nothing quite like this..."



Last year's *Medal Of Honor Underground* was a travesty. It tried to storm the same fps route of its PS2 cousin and was promptly cut down in a blaze of Bon Jovi. Credit EA, then, for having the courage to try something new.

Medal Of Honor Infiltrator takes the series back to basics. It's a mostly top-down shooter in the mould of *Cannon Fodder*. Though there's plenty of Nazi and Vichy Frenchies to be blown up, tactical fighting is the order of the day. To succeed, you'll either have to find cover, draw the enemy onto you one-by-one, or find bigger, better, more radiation-tipped weapons *(Careful – Politics Ed.)*. To make the battles more gruelling, you'll also have to contend with enemy planes, artillery and snipers. What we're saying is that *MoH* is the tough side of 'challenging.'

The great thing about *Infiltrator* though, is that the quicker you get shot up, the more you just want to get stuck in. There are plenty of brainless blasters on the GBA, but there isn't anything else quite as rewarding. Indeed, just when your patience is being stretched... the game finds a change of pace. Into *Silent Scope/Time Crisis*-style shooting levels, for instance.

Throw in old newsreels, cracking animation, the cute way buildings flip inside-out when you walk into them and missions so demanding they have sub-missions inside sub missions – the clever things – and you've a game that deserves to be decorated. Let us put it simply: *MoH Infiltrator* is a triumph. **SCOTT ANTHONY**

LOOK 'N' FEEL
'Functional', is how the book of reviewers euphemisms would describe it.

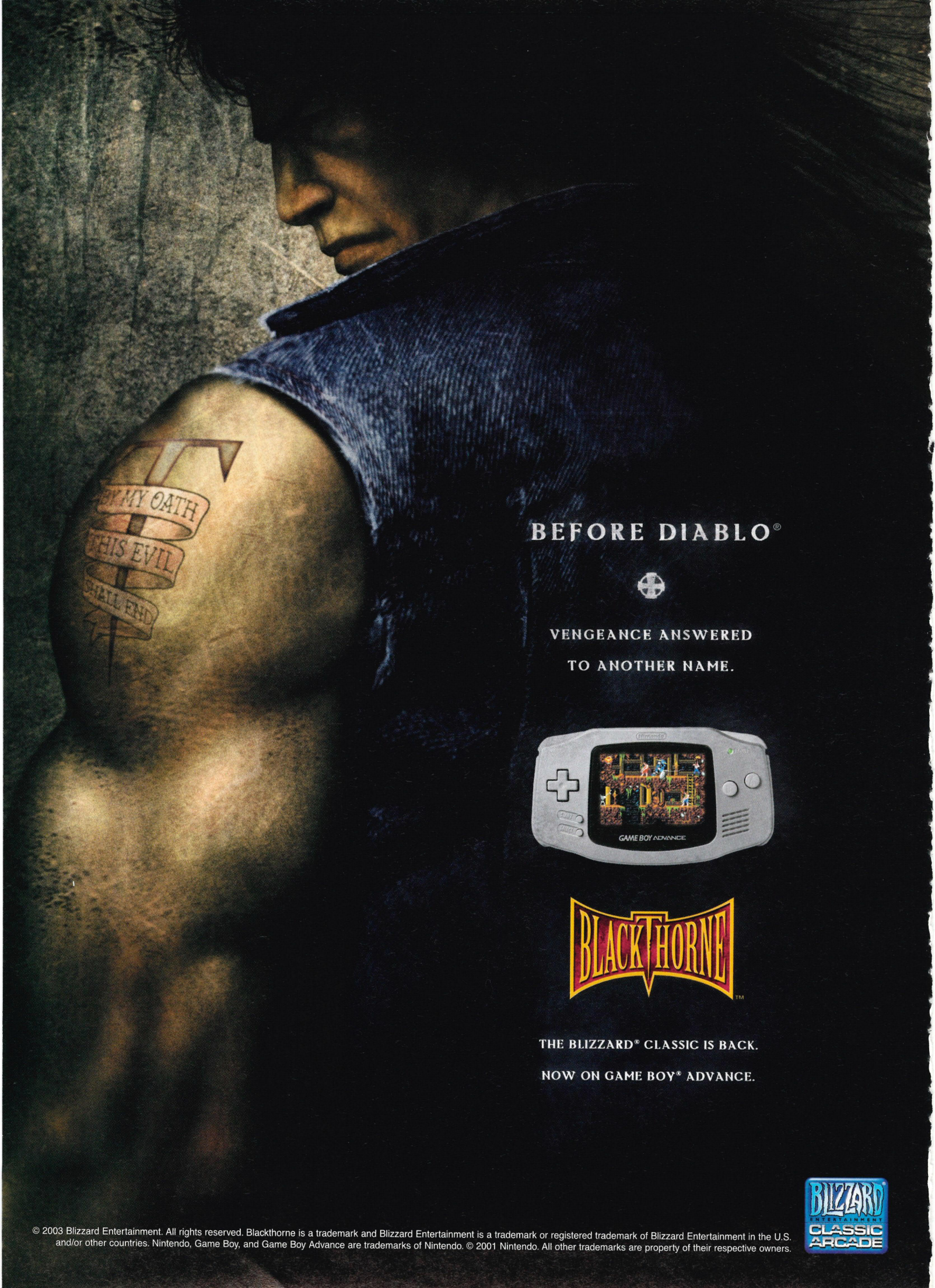
LIFESPAN
1939-1945 and then some. Plenty of modes and most importantly, fun.

GAMEPLAY
Reminds us of *Commando*. The game, not the Governor Of California movie.

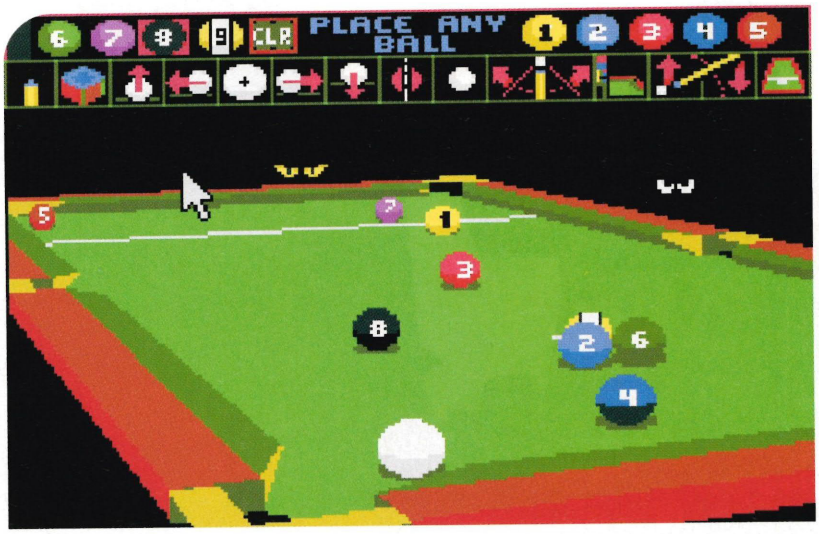
DIFFICULTY
It's a war out there. No, really. Miniature pixelated people are dying.

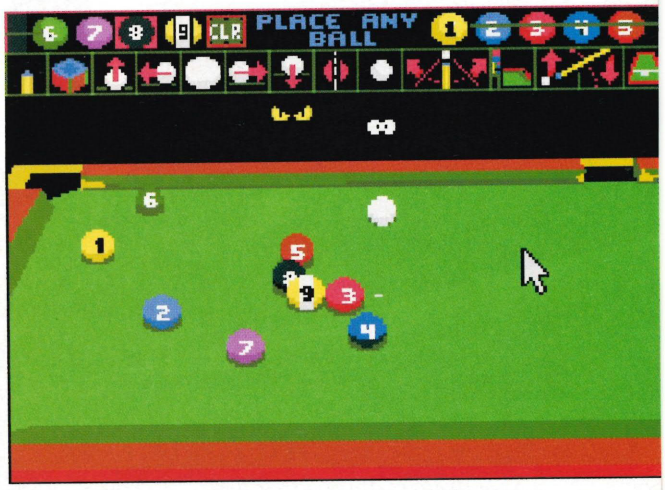
ADVANCE OPINION
As good as the first game was bad. Forget the blunt bayonet graphics, this is the finest military hardware available for your handheld.

89%



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The series has always had a sense of fun, although the constant ball blinking is epileptically irritating at times.

ARCHER MACLEAN'S POOL

GAMEINFO

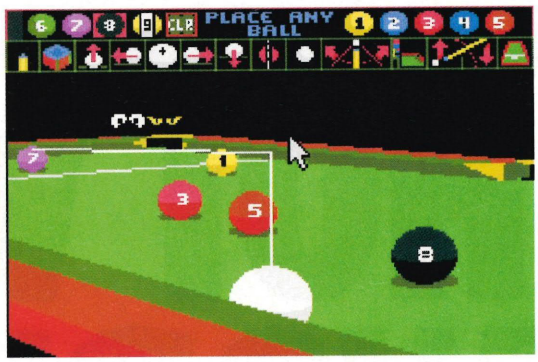
- **PUBLISHER** Ignition Entertainment
- **PHONE** 01992 703 974
- **WEB** www.ignitionent.com
- **PRICE** £15
- **SAVE** No
- **LINK-UP** No
- **OUT** Now

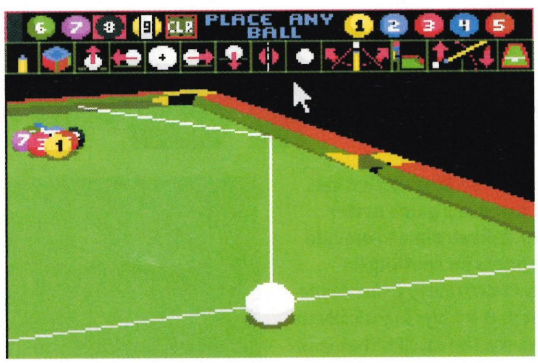
More than a decade ago, there was a game on the PC and Amiga called *Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker*. And you're looking at it. True, there's a different name above the title, and that title is now *'Pool'*, but that's about the only major advance that ol' Jimbo has made since his first appearance in 1991. Even the control system remains basically the same – swapping the old fashioned mouse and joystick for a GBA pad, but sadly retaining the horrible old icon system that turned the plonk of ball into pocket into frankly a bit of a balls up.

Here's the problem. Almost every Pool and Snooker game released in the last few years – let's group them together in a category called, "Not Decade Old Rehashes" – has at least made the effort to make you feel that it's you making the pots. The boy *Archer* however, prefers to have you click on one icon and select the exact level of force to apply, then additional icons to choose exactly where you want to hit the cue ball, and then finally another button for the computer to take the shot. Does it work? Well, yes – but how about a Pinball-style plunger, or a golf-game swingometer, or maybe even something new involving rumble packs or motion sensors? Something else, anyway. But that's to criticise a game for what it could have been, not what it is.

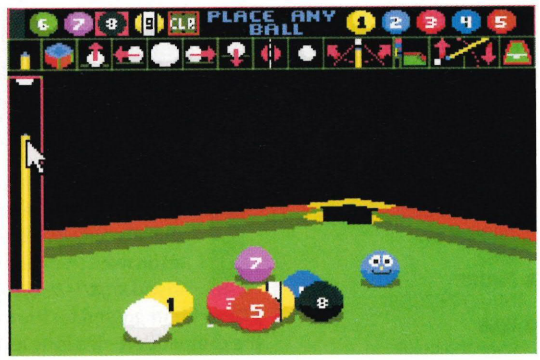
Top Tip
You can see where the cueball is heading with a training line, which makes it easy to lineup shots. Using this in two-player is cheating.

For £15 you're getting a silk-handkerchief polished iteration of not only one of the best pool game's ever but a classic videogame in it's own right. And while the gameplay may be over ten years old, at least Ignition have had the decency to charge 1991's prices. **RICH COBBETT**





The camera will spin to show you the table from almost any angle, but you go behind the ball to aim.



There are only so many things you can say about a pool table. As this caption proves.

> "For £15 you're getting a silk-handkerchief polished iteration of the best pool game ever..."

LOOK 'N' FEEL
Excellent 3D table, with lots of fun touches scattered around.

LIFESPAN
Not much longevity in single player, but easy to hotseat with a friend.

GAMEPLAY
Those infernal icons! Get past those however, and it plays decently.

DIFFICULTY
Plenty of AI opponents to go up against, plus friends and family.

ADVANCE OPINION
As good a 3D pool game as you'll find, as long as you don't mind having to fiddle with rather more than chalk on baize.

81%



★ The courses bend around like Spaghetti junction, with cars almost constantly flipping over your head

HOT WHEELS WORLD RACE

GAMEINFO

- **PUBLISHER** THQ
- **PHONE** 01483 767656
- **WEB** www.thq.co.uk
- **PRICE** £20
- **SAVE** Password
- **LINK-UP** Yes
- **OUT** Now

There's a question to ponder. Can the fact that cars are harder to drive help to make a game better than its competition? *Hot Wheels* aims to provide an answer. There are no prizes for spotting its *Mario Kart/F-Zero/Krazy Racers/Every Other Mode-7 Racer* heritage, and for the most part it plays identically to the competition – if a little less wacky. The catch is that your Hot Wheels racers, unlike the customary lawnmowers that you get to drive in these games, require a touch more care and attention to get around the track. Slamming at full speed into a jump-pad is no longer a guarantee of getting safely to the other side, as your car is liable to tilt sideways as you launch into mid-air, increasing the already alarming possibility of your car landing flat on its back everytime you leave the tarmac. Likewise, taking a corner too fast will now slipslide you straight into the ever present track borders. Welcome to the world of finicky arcade racing.



★ No bonus points for being a careful driver. Slam your foot down and take the jump

DOWN ON THE TRACK

It's not enough to simply want to win. You have to actually win too. Seems simple, but there you go. To do this, you'll need to rely on three crucial things – your team, your driver, and your own natural driving skill.



★ There are four teams to pick from, including the cool as nails Streetbreed, the cool as nails Scorchers and the Dune Ratz.



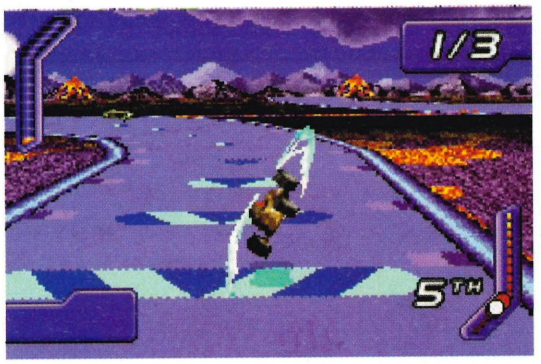
★ Each has three drivers to pick from, although only the first is available at the start of the game. And it's always you *really* doing the driving.



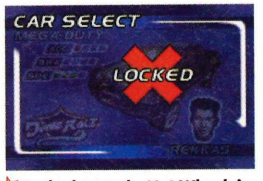
★ Finally, it's onto the course itself where – no surprise – it's time to kick off in last place. It'll be a pleasant surprise if we can avoid crashing, mind.



★ There are a few weapons on the track, but much rarer than in the *Mario/Krazy Racers* ilk of driving games.



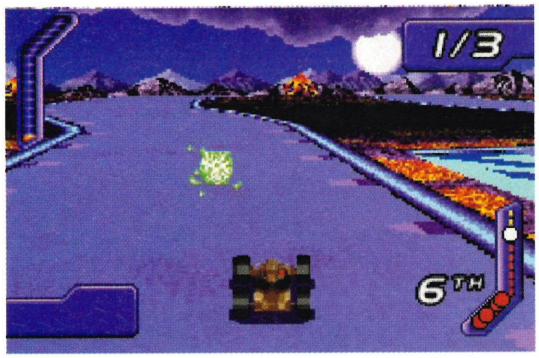
★ Flip your car so sharply that it could scythe through titanium. That's what we've done. Completely without meaning to.



★ Locked away in *Hot Wheels* is a great game. It's called *Mario Kart*, we said, unkindly.

If anything, it's a bit of a shame that these more complex arcade racing elements didn't see a bit more focus in the development stage. Take the spinning element – it's a nice touch, especially the ability to flip cartwheels on your way to the other side – but there is no way for a car to physically begin spinning in mid-air as if fitted with jet-engines. Likewise, skidding into a wall adds an element of tactical play – but being hit by a fireball screams of trying to ram in as many *Mario Kart* features as humanly possible. Unless, of course, *Hot Wheels* have become one hell of a lot cooler in the past few years.

Top Tip
Don't try for clever flips on every jump. The satisfaction isn't worth the flashy red PANTS you get for wiping out.



★ A brown car on a purple road. There seems to be something terribly poignant about the image, somehow.

Needless to say, the game parts are split into the usual sections – Time Trials for practicing your driving skills, Multiplayer for challenging friends and family and the main League, complete with short story segments. There's little real feeling of discovery during this, thanks to some highly generic – if convoluted – courses to scream your way around, and it's hard not to start wishing for a splash more character, but it'll certainly last you for a while.

In addition to advancing through this, success unlocks a decent range of content, including additional cars to race in, teams to drive them and tracks to drive them on. While it's hard to get overly excited about the cars themselves (sorry, *Hot Wheels* fans) rather than seeing them as slightly different collections of stats in a box, they do at least feel a bit chunkier than the normal cartoon fare. The racing environments give them plenty of chances to shine too, with looped courses, challenging jumps over the main racetrack, and twisting roads that turn so much that you become almost instantly alert to the presence of any other racers that might be on your tail. Sadly, beyond this, things are considerably less exciting, and it's hard not to be left longing for the pastel colours and cartoon charms of *Hot Wheels*' more illustrious predecessors.

Hot Wheels as a whole is considerably more solid than the micro machines (oops, wrong fad) at its heart, but unlikely to keep you rolling for too long. A safe bet if you want to be a Gameboy racer, but at least a few laps away from pole position. **RICHARD COBBETT**

> "Unlike your customary racing game lawnmowers, *Hot Wheels* cars require care..."

LOOK 'N' FEEL
Decent, if pretty generic. A good edge on car controls.

GAMEPLAY
A few nice touches, but ultimately much the same as other *Mode-7*ers.

LIFESPAN
Plenty of courses and cars to unlock, plus multiplayer.

DIFFICULTY
A bit of time needed to get used to car control, then business as usual.

ADVANCE OPINION
Qualifies with little problem, but *Hot Wheels World Race* is left stalled on the grid against its more established rivals.

79%

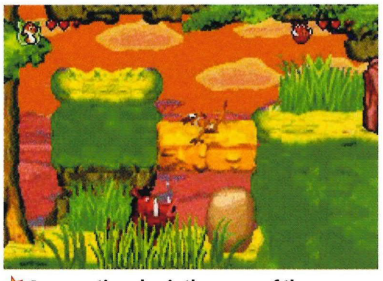




★ Leaping around like a loon is clearly the safest way to cross a deadly abyss.



★ That's a great attitude to life, going round with a big smile... Ignoring the strange horses.

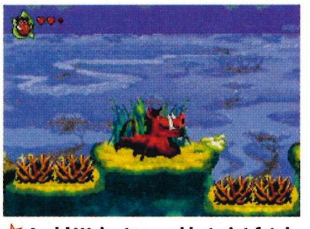


★ Note to Newton. How can a saggy-assed hog jump so high? And how can he jump higher with a cat on his back?

★ Co-operative play is the name of the game. Not hiding from each other in the grass.



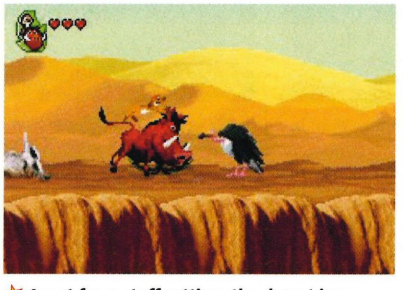
★ Say hello to the hyenas. That's Hi-enas... And we'd heard that they always laughed.



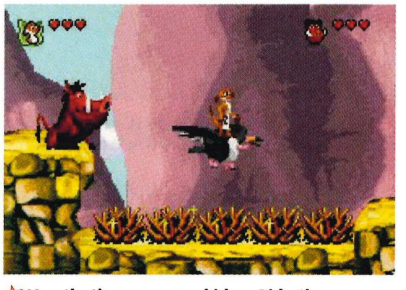
★ Argh! We're trapped betwixt fatal spikes. Until we jump over them.



★ Elephants dancing. It's all got a bit too much like a Missy Elliot video. You'd have thought they'd be more into jungle music.



★ Apart from stuff rotting, the desert is as deserted as the dessert counter at Pizza Hut.



★ Yes, that's a very good idea. Ride the vulture's to avoid the lethal horticulture.

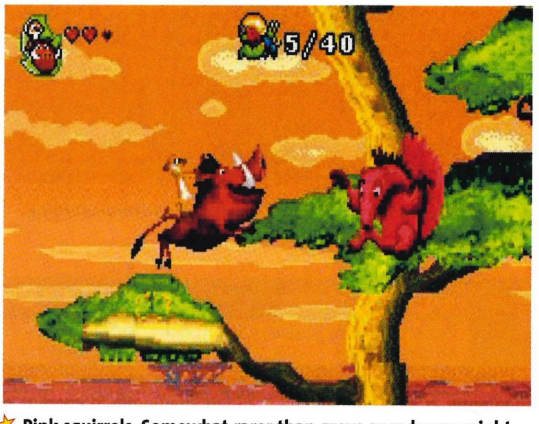
THE LION KING 1.5: HAKUNA MATATA

GAMEINFO

- **PUBLISHER** THQ
- **PHONE** 01483 767656
- **WEB** www.thq.co.uk
- **PRICE** £20
- **SAVE** To Cart
- **LINK-UP** No
- **OUT** Out Now

You're probably wondering what this *Lion King 1.5* thing is all about. Well, it's the new *Lion King* movie, but why the decimal place, why not *Lion King 2*? Is it all about a *Lion King* who prowls around with half a zebra sticking out of its gob, or perhaps some freak of nature Lion King who's got himself pregnant? Of course not, this is Disney we're talking about. *Lion King 1.5* is neither prequel nor sequel. It's actually the tale of Timon the testy Meercat and the farty warthog Pumbaa, and it expands on the part they played in the original *Lion King*. Call it an extended highlights package. The film is in cinemas next year and your local Burger King should have more details and doubtless a few placcy toys.

And so to the game of the film, in shops this October and teasingly released well before the movie. It's a grizzly, gory and gruesome beat 'em up with a pack of face-shredding African animals to fight as... Okay, no it's not. It's a likeable



★ Pink squirrels. Somewhat rarer than greys or reds you might think. But then you haven't played *Lion King 1.5* yet.

WHEN HYENAS ATTACK!

It's a dangerous place is the African bush, and you'll have to be on your toes if you want to keep all your limbs in place. The main beast to watch out for is the hyena. There are packs of them patrolling the levels and they've got a very nasty bite.



★ **The name of the level leaves you with no illusions about what to expect. It's going to be full of slavering hyenas. And they're going to attack. Yikes! Run for it.**



★ **Although the plains are full of dangerous animals, there are some friendly types on hand to dish out useful advice. This is one of the levels where you have to be speedy.**



★ **During the opening levels you'll be given handy pointers on how to deal with the various obstacles that lie in your path. Bouncing on their heads will temporarily stun the dogs.**



★ **Pumbaa looks pleased as punch, having belched in the hyena's face and made him dizzy. If you use his charge attack, you'll be rid of the beast permanently.**

side-scrolling platformer featuring the two stars of the film, Timon and Pumbaa. Pitched fairly and squarely at those who still like to slouch around in their Lion King dressing gown on a Saturday morning, the game is rather basic and incredibly easy but also cute, cuddly and very long. There are dozens and dozens of levels and you get to play as both the Meerkat and the Warthog.

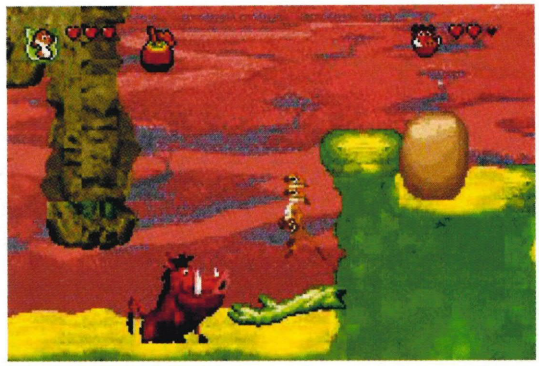
It's the pairing of these two unlikely heroes that's going to be the real hook for fans. Some of the levels have you playing as just one of the characters, while others demand co-operative play between the two as they use their individual skills to help each other past obstacles. In principle, *Lion King 1.5*, works like *Mario & Luigi*, in reality it's more like this issues', *Brother Bear*.

Top Tip

Each level contains forty insects for you to collect. Collect them all to earn yourself bonus levels, mini-games and video clips.

Anyway, Pumbaa can use his charge attack to break down walls, for example, while Timon's burrowing ability allows him to dig through dirt that's blocking the path and his small size can get him through tunnels inaccessible to the big fella.

Some of the most fun sections, though, are when Timon rides on the back of Pumbaa and they charge down the path to escape an oncoming stampede of elephants or a runaway boulder. Also amusing is the way in which you deal with bad guys like porcupines and hyenas. Timon has to avoid the porcupines by jumping over them, but Pumbaa's stinky breath attack can floor them in one go. When it comes to the hyenas, however, Timon has the most entertaining method of getting past unscathed. Press the right shoulder button and he'll do a little dance and make some silly faces, forcing the hyenas to collapse in fits of laughter. While they're weeing themselves, Timon can slip by.



★ **A big rock. Since the neolithic age its been brewing there waiting to fall on our heads. Ouch!**



★ **Can't believe we're getting ignored by a Zebra, but we are.**

> "It's a gory, grizzly, beat 'em up with face-shredding African animals to fight..."

All-in-all, it's a pleasant enough game. But aside from the co-operative element, it does nothing that hasn't been seen myriad times before. There's lots of jumping over spike-filled pits, bouncing on enemies heads and collecting insects (instead of the usual gold coins). But considering the fact that *Lion King 1.5*, was put together by top GBA codies Vicarious Visions – they behind the *Tony Hawk's* games and cover star, *Crash Nitro Kart* – it's hard not to be a little disappointed. It does looks nice though, and will keep *Lion King* fans quiet for good long while. The rest of us will just have to wait for that Simba vs Scar beat 'em up. **NICK ELLIS**



★ **An innovative licence by Disney? Pigs might fly. Or is it Boars? *LK* is decent enough, but not the wonder it could have been.**



★ **The graphics are lovely, it's almost like being in the African bush. Except with rubbish British weather. And blue monkeys.**

LOOK 'N' FEEL
It's bright and cheerful and easy to get to grips with.

LIFESPAN
A nice array of challenges and the co-operative levels are excellent.

GAMEPLAY
Dozens of levels and there's plenty of bonus stuff to unlock too.

DIFFICULTY
As easy as tying your shoelaces. No, considerably easier.

ADVANCE OPINION
Although limited in appeal, this is a thoroughly decent Disney platformer that'll delight little *Lion King* aficionados.

62%





Kenai ponders the thorn bush, and wonders at its ability to hurt near-lethally even with the slightest of brushes. The Gorse of true love, eh?

"*Brother Bear* falls into the '*My First Platformer Territory*'... Nothing surprises"

DISNEY'S BROTHER BEAR



Thank goodness they're wearing those bear-skin rugs, as it looks mighty cold.

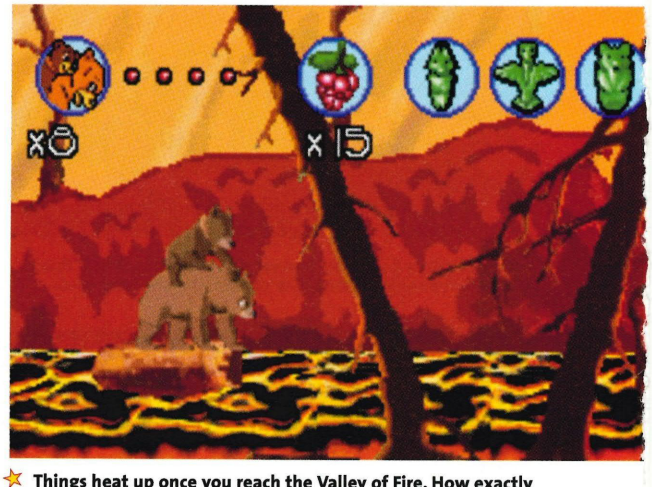
GAMEINFO

- **PUBLISHER** THQ
- **PHONE** 01483 767656
- **WEB** www.thq.co.uk
- **PRICE** £25
- **SAVE** Password
- **LINK-UP** No
- **OUT** Now

We all know that if there's a new Disney film at the cinema, then it means there'll be a new Disney game on our GBA – it's one of the Laws of the Universe. However, we also know that the universe is chaotic, and attempts to discover order and predictable patterns are inevitably in vain. There certainly appears to be no pattern whatsoever to how Disney go about developing their handheld licences.

Occasionally they will create something reasonably innovative, drawing in all the key elements of the film, recreating the most game-worthy scene and generally playing around with traditional platform game design. Other times they appear to have fallen asleep while programming, chucking out whatever they have in time for the release date. *Brother Bear* lies about halfway between the two extremes.

Because of the film's low target age, the game is similarly pitched, meaning the bias is against a steep difficulty curve



Things heat up once you reach the Valley of Fire. How exactly is a wooden log floating in molten lava?

PHOTOGRAPHING WILDLIFE

There is a wide variety of graphical styles in *Brother Bear*, and while none of them are outstanding, it's good to see some variation on the theme. All maintain that Disney look and feel that they so carefully cultivate, but occasionally you do wonder whether it all quite hangs together as one coherent package.



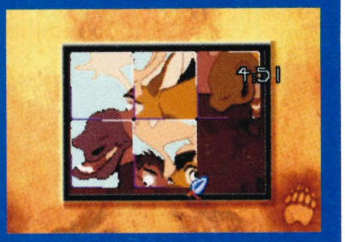
★ Interestingly, Disney have chosen to digitise some of the cartoon itself, to be used as the intro sequence, setting the mood.



★ The regular look of the levels, because the background's brighter than the characters, though – it can get a bit cluttered.



★ A 3D section, as the bears ride atop a mammoth. The trees fall in your path, and you must jump over them to succeed.



★ A sliding tile puzzle. The concept is strange enough in such a game, but the graphics here are as dull as they could be.

or elaborate controls. Instead, the game trudges a steady path of repetitive challenges, following the same formula for level after level.

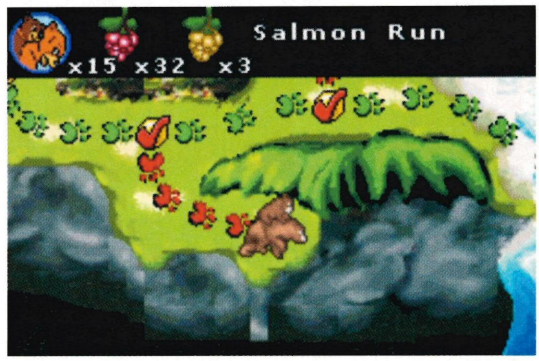
The starring bear is not a proper bear at all, but a young man, Kenai, who was turned into a bear after he killed a, er, bear. Paired up with a young cub called Koda, Kenai is searching for a way to return to humanoid form. Each level is split into three sections, the first and third of each has Koda on Kenai's back, while the second section has the two separated, offering a more puzzly approach. Koda can sneak through narrower spaces, while his bigger friend can jump higher and push heavier obstacles. Using these skills, the two can clear pathways for each other to reach their goal.

Top Tip
Collecting 50 raspberries will earn you an extra life, which makes it worth leaping for all of them, especially those in tree stumps.

These levels are occasionally interspersed with mini-games, which vary widely in terms of what you have to do, but repeat themselves often. One involves riding on the back of a mammoth in a slightly lacklustre 3D escapade. Another is a sliding puzzle game, where you have to restore the image within a time limit. These extras serve to underline the young audience the game is aimed at, as the mini-games are ludicrously easy to complete, and so familiar in type that they do not require any complicated instructions. We've been more surprised by the ending of a *Scooby Doo* cartoon, to be honest.

The standard levels are exactly that, following the aged rules of platformers – grassy levels, followed by slippery ice levels, followed by hot fiery levels, and finishing in the mountains. It couldn't be more obvious or less ground-breaking. *Brother Bear* falls quite squarely in to the *My First Platformer Territory*. Quite strikingly, the last level in a section is not necessarily any more difficult than the first. It makes us wonder how much care went in to the organisation of the level design. New gameplay elements *are* brought in once you move into the next area, but they are few and far between. And then right at the very end, it suddenly becomes incredibly difficult, with not so much a difficulty curve, as a difficulty right-angle. Bonkers.

Entirely generic, and without fresh ideas, it's safe to say that anyone over the age of eight isn't going to find much to interest them in Disney's latest. Although, if you're a parent be prepared to step in and help with that last level, it's a killer. Oh, brother. **JOHN WALKER**



★ The map screen lets you choose your path through the levels, and allows you to go back to mini-games at any time.



★ A picture-pairs puzzle mini-game features key characters from the film.



★ If the film's a flop, at least we at ADVANCE can sell Kenai and Koda to the circus.



★ Bridges crumble behind you, meaning there's no turning back, and that you are a big fat lardy bear.

LOOK 'N' FEEL
The character animation is smooth, but the backgrounds are poorly painted.

LIFESPAN
If played by the target audience, a reasonable length.

GAMEPLAY
Repetitive, with little variation, and hopeless repeating of mini-games.

DIFFICULTY
Very low, until right at the end, with the last level being near-stupidly hard.

ADVANCE OPINION
Pitched at the youngest audience, it leaves little for anyone else to be entertained by. The last level's tough, though.

54%









THE SIMS BUSTIN' OUT

GAMEINFO

- **PUBLISHER** EA
- **PHONE** 01932 450000
- **WEB** www.uk.ea.com
- **PRICE** £35
- **SAVE** To cart
- **LINK-UP** Yes
- **OUT** Now



The green bars at the bottom tell you life stat stuff – like when you need the loo.

Top Tip
Be nice to people. It makes the game considerably duller, but it greases the career pole.



Time for one of those highly exciting, sitting-down-on-a-bench moments.



Life is very Sim-ple. Make your uncle happy by paying him compliments and minding the tractor.

"The Sims expertly straddles the line between quietly absorbing and plain tedious"

GBA-mongers get your jokes about lesbian poets here. Three-eared genetically-tampered with mice are on the lose. The wettest biker gang in the world are threatening no-one... And the game that thinks it's *The Simpsons* is making its debut on Ninty's star handheld.

The Sims, as you surely know, is the videogame equivalent of *Big Brother*. Or, less fashionably, it's an interactive dolls house. The GBA version of Maxis' classic is a substantially cut-down version of the PC game, but unless you're some kind of Sim Purist, absorbing enough in its own right.

The game begins when a you-designed character – let's say a Chinese girl with pigtails called Scott – moves in with their hick farmer uncle. Through the course of the game you're charged with getting your own place, pursuing an inevitably odd career and accumulating other grown up stuff. You do all this by walking up to things and pressing A, and completing mini-games. Folk in your uncle's weird neighbourhood will set you tasks – like uncovering the mystery of the phantom chicken stealer – and once you've completed them, your avatar will improve as a person and more importantly, get cash.

The Sims shares obvious affinities with Japanese life-management games, such as *Harvest Moon*. Unlike those games, *The Sims*, takes itself less seriously. The jokes, such as they are, are refreshingly funny. First time round, anyway.

Expertly straddling the line between quietly absorbing and plain tedious, *The Sims* is a welcome, though we suspect cult-ish, addition to the GBA family. Have it round for tea. **SCOTT ANTHONY**



LOOK 'N' FEEL
Cute, with silly animations. The GBA equivalent of *Edward Scissorhands*.

LIFESPAN
A virtual life to lead, and a full virtual life at that.

GAMEPLAY
Unlike *Sim City* (page 69) *Bustin' Out* is no faithful GBA conversion.

DIFFICULTY
You'll smile at the toilet joke first time. Hours later, you'll grimace.

ADVANCE OPINION
A handheld-sized sit com. Fans of the PC series may be disappointed by the GBA version's lack of scope, but it's still fun.

74%





Finally, we got to blow stuff up. But not enough. So we semtexed the cart. Kindest thing anyone's ever done for it.

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

GAMEINFO

- **PUBLISHER** Konami
- **PHONE** 01895 470503
- **WEB** www.konami.co.uk
- **PRICE** £25
- **SAVE** To cart
- **LINK-UP** No
- **OUT** Now



Top Tip
As soon as the mutants appear super-dash to get a full combo in, then run away and repeat. Radical, eh?



We played *TMNT* under expert supervision. *Do not* attempt at home.

"You spend time watching Raphael twitch and make crap jokes – not fighting ninjas"

You know that feeling when you order a joint pizza and no-one's quite sure what they want so everyone adds their own stuff and you end up with anchovies and pineapples? Well, *TMNT*'s a bit like that, except that it also turns out you've ordered a children's pizza and it's far too small. Cowa-frickin-bunga.

The action's introduced by huge, mostly static scenes of Leonardo, Splinter and the gang explaining the plot by pulling faces and jiggling a bit. Each of the four turtles (techy, surfy, snarly and leadery) has got four stages – usually two fighting ones, a platform bit and a vehicle section. The thing is, they're incredibly short – in Michaelangelo's sewer-skateboarding bit, for instance, you've just about got time to get the hang of doing ceiling loops when it's all over. Chuck in a bike race/fight with Casey Jones that's over in a combined total of maybe five minutes, and you've got a game that takes less time to get through than an extra-large meat feast.

To put that another way, you're going to spend more time watching Raphael twitch and make crap jokes than actually hitting ninjas. Speaking of which, the fighting's pretty basic – you've got a basic combo, a jumping attack, an energy-draining super-attack and a three-level charge move. Don't worry too much about them, mind. The super-dash/combo takes care of practically every bad guy, and apart from the mutant monster things on Mikey's bit, they all move exactly the same. Whoah.

Interesting bit of trivia: 90s rapper Vanilla Ice practically killed his own career by appearing in *Turtles 2: Secret Of The Ooze*. And that film's still a better way of spending an hour and a half than playing this. Bogus. JOEL SNAPE

LOOK 'N' FEEL
Just like the show, except none of the characters move very much.

LIFESPAN
Less like a turtle, more like a mayfly. Or possibly, a turtle in a microwave.

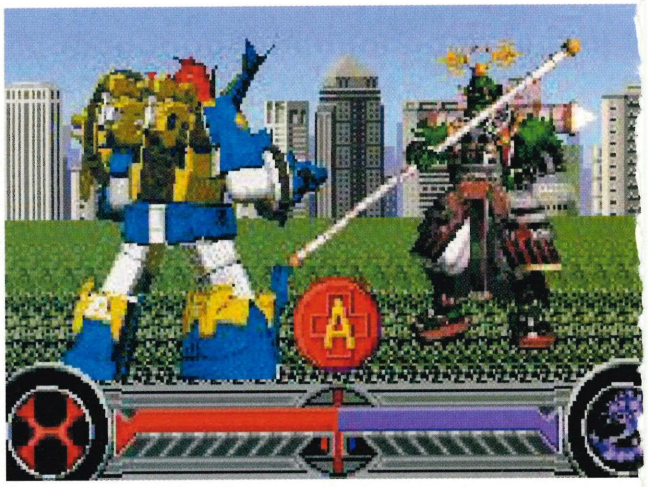
GAMEPLAY
Run. Jump. Dash-attack goons. Repeat for an hour. Take back to shop.

DIFFICULTY
It's easier than our groundbreaking game, 'Breathing Through Your Nose'.

ADVANCE OPINION
It'll keep you busy through, say, a longish bus journey or a tedious *Hollyoaks* omnibus, but don't expect much fun. Dude.

39%





Megazord Battle: hit down + A simultaneously, then watch as your 'Zord unleashes hell... On you and your games collection.

POWER RANGERS: NINJA STORM

GAMEINFO

- **PUBLISHER** THQ
- **PHONE** 01483 767656
- **WEB** www.thq.co.uk
- **PRICE** £25
- **SAVE** Password
- **LINK-UP** No
- **OUT** Now

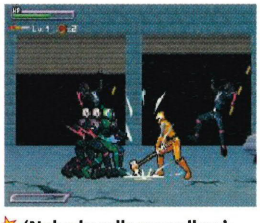


Now that's a fetching outfit the Blue Ranger is modelling. No wonder that wall plant is salivating. Taxi!

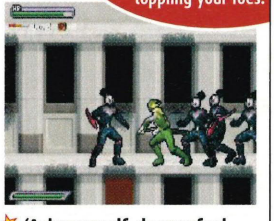
Top Tip

If you find yourself surrounded, hit 'select' to switch Rangers. Your new Ranger will drop in, toppling your foes.

"About as fun as the after-effects of mouldy birthday cake – back-flip away..."



'Nobody calls me yellow': use special weapons to stop your opponents crowdsurfing.



'Ask yourself, do you feel lucky? Well do you, punk?' A chinese burn sees off the boss.

Tyrannosaurus, Stegosaurus, Rhinoceros... raaaah!!! Ah, those heady days of the mid-90s when the Rangers were the best thing on GMTV [sigh]. Well, we at ADVANCE, being all grown up now, were as stunned – as you may be – to hear that the Power Rangers celebrate their 10th birthday this year. Birthday or not, we can't help crashing the party.

Ninja Storm's plot is clichéville: evil aliens have attacked all the ninja academies as part of a diabolical bid to take over the earth. Hence the Wind and Thunder Rangers team up with the way cooler Green Samurai Ranger to save the day.

So, you play as either the Wind Rangers, Thunder Rangers or the solo Green Ranger, with each team following a barely-varied path through the game. This allows for uninterrupted mid-game Ranger switches, about as un-special a touch as the different weapons each character carries (bog standard sword, gun, flame-thrower etc.). The replay value is as low as the Rupee, despite there being 20 explorable 'episodes', but not even three difficulty levels can bring the game back from a K.O. – we completed it in an afternoon.

The tedium of the side-scrolling platform format is thankfully interrupted with the TV-derived Megazord battles (super bosses), whom you'll need quick reflexes to defeat... But not that quick. Once you get the hang of the misleading screen prompts, these giants are a pushover. Even mighty morphed 'tough' versions of the baddies (Kelzaks) behave like Kamikaze pilots – just bash 'em and watch 'em fly. *Power Rangers* is a shoddy product tie-in and as about as fun as the after-effects of mouldy birthday cake. Back flip away and live to *Final Fight* another day instead. **CHAS ROWE**

LOOK 'N' FEEL
Now we know why they dropped 'Mighty Morphin' from the title.

LIFESPAN
If boredom doesn't set in, seven hours. There's not £25's worth of replay value.

GAMEPLAY
Walk, jump, lash out. Clash with end-of-level Megazord. Repeat if desired.

DIFFICULTY
Lower than the lowest limbo record. Completion is pretty much a cinch.

ADVANCE OPINION
Having not seen the Rangers on telly for yonks, we're baffled at this release. Pound for pound, *Final Fight* is where it's at.

45%

SIM CITY 2000

GAMEINFO

- **PUBLISHER** Zoo
- **PHONE** 0114 2413700
- **WEB** zoodigitalgroup.com
- **PRICE** £30
- **SAVE** On cart
- **LINK-UP** No
- **OUT** Now

How do you pack a complex, intricate PC game into a GBA cartridge and make it work? We're not quite sure, but Zoo have come up trumps with *Sim City 2000*. It's about as accurate a conversion as we've seen, and though there's a whole lot of information onscreen at any one time, it all works rather well.

In case you've never heard of the *Sim City* series, it does exactly what it says on the tin – it's a city simulator. After choosing one of four maps, which differ in terms of size and terrain, it's your job to build a city from the ground up. This means placing power plants, industrial zones, residential areas and all sorts of other civic elements on the map, then tying it all together with infrastructure such as roads and power lines. And all the while, you'll be trying to balance your incomings and outgoings.



Call us tin-pot despots, but we fancied building a few statues in honour of our collective glory. Hail, us.



As your city grows, keeping the residents supplied with essentials gets tricky. Also, the blighters get ungrateful.

There are also several pre-set games, which require you to manage events after major disasters in pre-built towns. You'd be surprised how much fun getting a city back on its feet after a nuclear meltdown, or even an alien invasion, is. And when you're bored of repairing stuff you'd be amazed what fun it is purposely destroying things again. In short, *Sim City 2000*'s an amazingly detailed game, and a rare treat for more serious GBA owners.

> "*Sim City* gives you the job of building a city from the ground up"

ADVANCE-OPINION
If you're after a game which will tickle the grey matter, *Sim City*'s for you.
82%

PRINCE OF PERSIA: SANDS OF TIME

GAMEINFO

- **PUBLISHER** Ubisoft
- **PHONE** 01932 838230
- **WEB** www.princeofpersiagame.com
- **PRICE** £30
- **SAVE** Cart
- **LINK-UP** No
- **OUT** Now

You've got the fancy baggy trousers. You've got the glorious, gem-encrusted scimitar. You get to swing your way through the Vizier's lair, chopping up his minions and swinging from the curtains. So where's the fun in being the Maharajah's son?

The fact is, *Prince Of Persia: Sands Of Time* is just another platform game. There are some nice touches which raise it above the norm, such as scrolls which, when collected, upgrade your skills so you can perform more fancy combat moves and actions – such as double-jumps, rolls and so forth. Also, you can activate the *Sands Of Time* of the title, and turn back the clock by a few seconds, which is very handy when you're about to get your head separated from your shoulders by a beefy henchman. This is the game's only stand out feature.



Why have we climbed up a pillar to avoid a wall of flame? Because we're too damn dramatic to use the stairs, that's why.



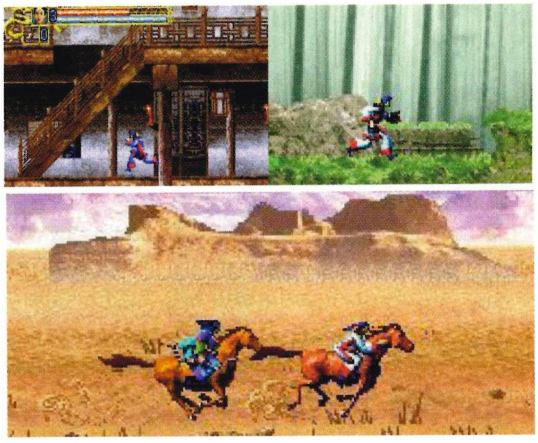
Not only did the boomerang come back, but this hairy dude returned with it. That's not a trick we'll be repeating.

Still and all, there's a lot of well-timed jumps to make, a lot of simple, mindless beasties to wallop and a bunch of bosses to bosh, which merely require you to work out the patterns in which they move. There's nothing inherently wrong with the game; indeed, it's pretty well polished. It's just that the GBA is already well served by the platformer. And if you're looking for something with oomph and originality, there are plenty of other places to look.

> "Fine, but if you're after originality look else where..."

ADVANCE-OPINION
A well-groomed platformer, but one devoid of any real originality.
70%

CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON



★ The 3.30 at Uttoxeter has gone somewhat astray.

GAMEINFO

- **PUBLISHER** Ubisoft
- **PHONE** 01932 838230
- **WEB** www.ubisoft.co.uk
- **PRICE** £30
- **SAVE** Password
- **LINK-UP** No
- **OUT** Now

Finally a beat 'em up based on the film that exposed the menacingly inventive, slo-mo, string-fu, visual style to western eyes for the first time. So why does this seem so familiar? Forget Newton-mocking wall-scampering acrobatics and floppy leaf walking, this is side-scrolling, retro-punchery of the type beloved by 80's arcade change-shovellers.

As is the way of such fare, there are a reasonable amount of regular kung-fu-ish moves at your disposal, and you'll have fun experimenting and exposing individual enemy's weak spots. Archer's prongs scythe across the landscape, chaps with lances prod at you before wind-milling their appendages aggressively: it's carnage out there. Most irritating are the rotund baldies wielding what appears to be a cannon ball on a handle – attacking low from the front is recommended, otherwise you'll get a mouthful of steel.

Problems arise when stuck in corners. As with many games of this nature, you'll come to a point where a number of baddies need to be slaughtered before the game will continue scrolling. It's a minor quibble, though. If frantic batterment is your bag, then you should be rapt. Those less respectful of our arcade heritage may wonder what the fuss is about. And that's probably most of you.

"The kind of side-scrolling punchery last seen in the 80s..."



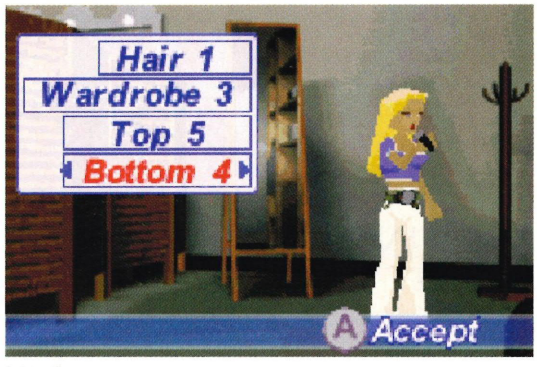
★ People come along and you beat them up. After a while no-one comes along, but you beat that up to. Ho hum.

ADVANCE-OPINION

One wonders what's taken it so long, but it's a solid enough if retro, re-imagining of the film's oriental fistycuffery.

61%

POP IDOL



★ We can't stop dressing up as girls – don't ask us why. So people will buy as drinks, we suppose.

GAMEINFO

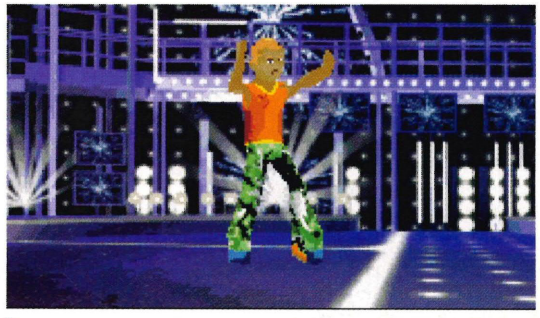
- **PUBLISHER** Codemasters
- **PHONE** 01926 816044
- **WEB** www.codemasters.co.uk
- **PRICE** £30
- **SAVE** Password
- **LINK-UP** No
- **OUT** Now

From thousands of entrants came Will and Gareth. Now you can be like them, in a game which wants to be *Space Channel 5*. Weird. There are three play modes: competition, rehearsal and endurance – though the latter two are just practice modes.

Competition mode takes you through the stages, right up to the grand final. Gameplay is basic to say the least: just hit A or B to determine what notes your Pop Idol sings. Hit the wrong button or line-up the cursor incorrectly and you'll go off key; score highly enough and you'll advance through to the next phase.

Beyond the ability to design, dress, style and coiffe your idol there's nothing much on offer – besides some loosely amusing performances from the characters. Perform well and you'll unlock new pop garb and song choices, which themselves are severely limited. Unlike its televisual namesake, which makes for frustratingly addictive viewing, *Pop Idol* is all-too easy to turn off. Most of all, we lament the absence of female judge and attractive older woman, Nicki Chapman. All Bemani is linear, but *Pop Idol* isn't exuberant enough to be entertaining. Your fifteen minutes of fame (and tolerance) will be up before you can say: G-G-G-G-Gareth Gates.

"Unlike the TV show, *Pop Idol GBA* is all-too easy to switch off..."



★ It was all meant to be... then this fella realised he couldn't sing, dance, dress or write captions. Grr.

ADVANCE-OPINION

As the witty waistline, Simon Cowell, says himself, "Let me entertain you? How about: No."

15%



Manage to whip any kind of cross into the box and you'll cause the kind of mayhem usually associated with David James.



FIFA prides itself on authenticity. Thankfully, they don't charge you £50 for every shirt featured.

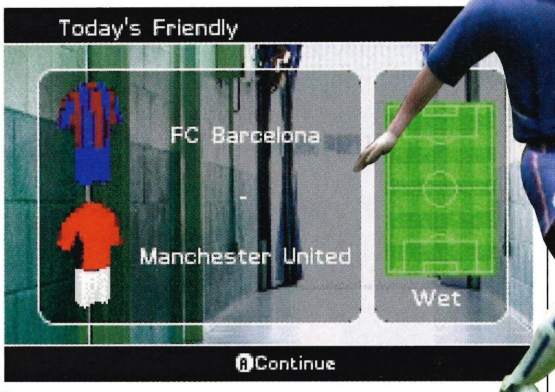


FIFA 2004

GAMEINFO

- **PUBLISHER** EA
- **PHONE** 01932 450000
- **WEB** www.ea-europe.com
- **PRICE** £35
- **SAVE** To cart
- **LINK-UP** Yes
- **OUT** Now





Ah, a chance for Ronaldhinio to rub his Man Yoo snub down the gin-blossomed one's throat. This we want to see.

"This is the stuff footballing dreams are made off... But we're not satisfied"

After about 20 minutes with *FIFA 2004* you're a footballing legend. A quick tap of the right shoulder button sends Denis Irwin flying down the left, he cuts inside, exchanges passes with Colin Cameron and launches a cross-field ball to Dean Sturridge's feet. With instant control, Deano steps away from his man and slides an inch-perfect ball through to Henry Camara. One quick press of the A button and a smidgen of after-touch later and it's Wolverhampton Wanderers 7, Manchester United 1.

This is the stuff footballing dreams are made of, and it seems churlish to complain about the fact that *FIFA 2004* requires only a small amount of effort to bring a huge amount of pleasure. Especially as, like every *FIFA* game before it, *FIFA 2004* is slicker than Sven and Nancy and boasts a Chelsea squad-sized amount of options to tweak, tinker and toy with.

But complain we must, as, once you've got used to manually choosing which player you control, things become as about as challenging as the Scottish Premiership. This really bothers us. Because, just as David Beckham only became a great player by training himself into the ground, it's impossible to highly recommend a game where after only 35 minutes, you're having to discipline yourself not to use one of the game's several score-every-time moves.

FIFA 2004 is highly enjoyable, and a blistering multiplayer experience, but here at ADVANCE we still find ourselves wanting the artistry of *O'Leary* on the GBC. **SCOTT ANTHONY**

LOOK 'N' FEEL
Evenly pitched between Luke Chadwick and David Ginola. Acceptable.

LIFESPAN
Like all sports titles, *FIFA 2004* comes into its own as a two-player title.

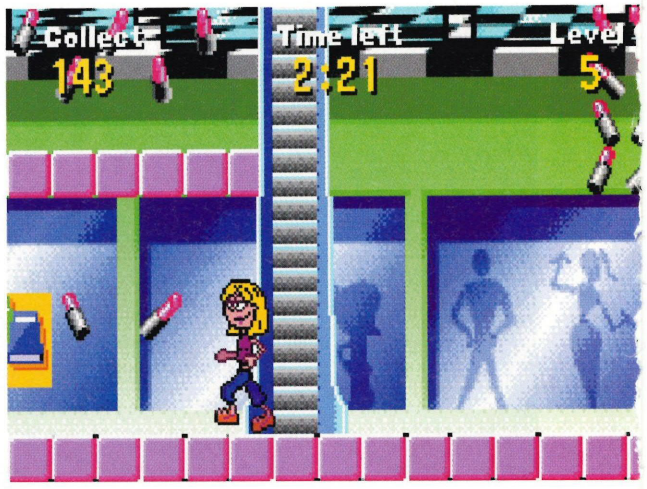
GAMEPLAY
The beautiful game for the Sky Sports just-add-controversy generation.

DIFFICULTY
Crank it up to expert. Then blindfold yourself and cut off one arm.

ADVANCE OPINION
Arguably, the best footie title on the GBA, but the thrills are as likely to be as short-lived as Wolves return to the top flight.

78%





When we think of awe-inspiring gaming environments, we think Forests of Jotoh. The Mushroom Kingdom. The Metro Center.

LIZZIE McGUIRE

GAMEINFO

- **PUBLISHER** THQ
- **PHONE** 01483 767656
- **WEB** www.thq.co.uk
- **PRICE** £30
- **SAVE** To cart
- **LINK-UP** Yes
- **OUT** Now

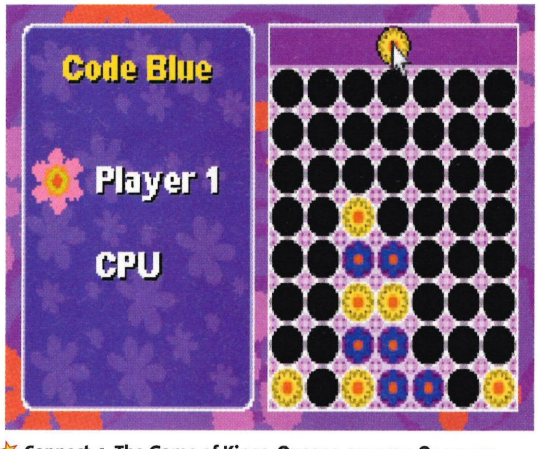
You know, girlies, that GBA SP does look like a little mascara case, so we can't really blame you if you've been a touch confused about what all those complicated buttons and light-up things and general boy stuff is all about. Well, whatever! Here we have a cool new game that you can play without even needing your big brother on hand, and isn't it just superduper with sugar and spice and all things nice? In the first *Lizzie McGuire* game, you get to take a trip to the mall, because all girls love a trip to the mall, and run around collecting pizza and shooting glitter at cheerleaders. Oooh, is that the unmistakable flap of your heart in a flutter? Don't worry, it's all nice and easy – and if your pulse can't take it, you can always move onto the other thrilling games on offer, like Connect 4 and writing down the names of your friends! What pure of heart girl wouldn't love it?!

Top Tip
You have to play When Cheerleaders Attack game to unlock extra modes. Use the time to brush your teeth instead.

Ngggh! Do people actually think like this? How is the world meant to react to this kind of simpering, patronising bibble? Do we really have to waste words explaining that girls who have bought GBAs have done so in order to play actual, good games like anybody else, and have no need for half-assed platform games that would embarrass an LCD watch? And as for horoscope generators that urge you to, like, not worry about secret crushes and try hard in school... Well, hello! We mean, games that think they're education, like, suck massively.

Well, at least there's one game that you can enjoy playing with Lizzie – punting the cartridge over the horizon. And speaking of kickers, here's ADVANCE's astrological prediction for Lizzie buyers: "You will soon be frustrated in a refunds line." **RICH COBBETT**

"You get to take a trip to the mall... Oooh, is that the sound of your heart in a flutter?"



Connect 4. The Game of Kings. Queens, anyway. Or are we thinking of Chess?



Be still, beating heart of mine. The only curiosity in *Lizzie McGuire* is seeing what rubbish gets wheeled out next.

LOOK 'N' FEEL
The developers' logo is most lovely. The rest is a solid 'meh.'

LIFESPAN
Plenty of games to unlock, yet oddly, still a matter of minutes.

GAMEPLAY
That would be nice. Let us know if you find any, would you?

DIFFICULTY
Patronisingly simple. Just like everything else in the game.

ADVANCE OPINION
The least advised modern girls' accessory since *Doting Housewife Barbie* and the *My Little Pony Knackers Yard*.

13%

STAR WARS: FLIGHT OF THE FALCON

GAMEINFO

- **PUBLISHER** THQ
- **PHONE** 01483 767656
- **WEB** www.thq.co.uk
- **PRICE** £30
- **SAVE** To cart
- **LINK-UP** No
- **OUT** Now

Gaming can be bad for you. Well, games like this certainly are. We reviewed *Flight Of The Falcon* last issue, or at least we tried to. This month we've actually manage of get off the first level and we thought we'd report back again. And, well, *FOF* is still hard. It'll make your wrists ache, your tendons wither and your eyes go blurry.

The game still manages to capture the spirit of *Star Wars* (the original *Star Wars* that is – none of your Jar Jar Binks rubbish here), through the use of music and sound effects. The screech of TIE Fighter engines, the squeal of blasters, the haunting Imperial march... it's all been squeezed into this cart wonderfully.

And yet, it's hard to recommend. Strip away the *Star Wars* trimmings and it really is just another mindless shooter, and some of the levels, such as the Mos Eisley speeder chase, are simply annoying for their extreme difficulty.

Just because the words '*Star*' and '*Wars*' are on the box, that's no guarantee of quality. Our advice is to do what Han Solo would: stash your cash in the cargo hold, and hit light speed – before arthritis sets in. *Flight Of The Falcon* will have you hitting fire so frequently your fingers will stop working.



Asteroids. They try and avoid us, yet we remain determined to fly into them. The fools.



Difficult ain't the word. Actually it is. Difficult and hard and impossible and, er, difficult. Don't say you weren't warned.

"The extreme difficulty of *FOF* is simply really, really annoying"

ADVANCE OPINION

***Star Wars* it is, long-term fun it ain't... Review this 100 times and it'd still be average.**

59%

TIGER WOODS PGA PRO TOUR 2004

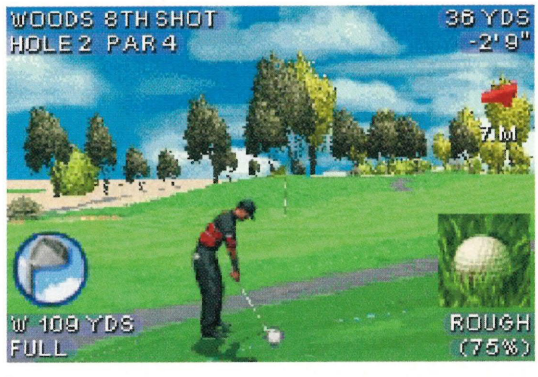
GAMEINFO

- **PUBLISHER** EA
- **PHONE** 01932 450000
- **WEB** www.uk.ea.com
- **PRICE** £35
- **SAVE** Cart
- **LINK-UP** Yes
- **OUT** Now

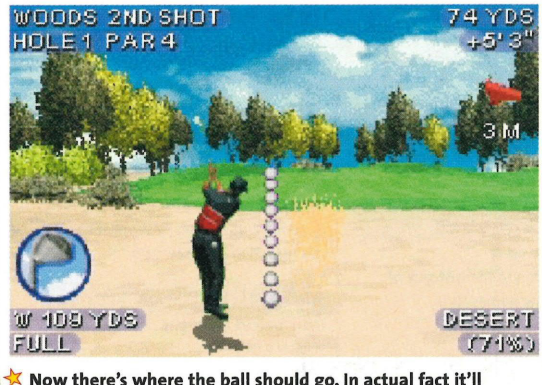
Consider this. For 80% of an average round, golfers are thinking. To be successful in the sport you need to be more mental than David Blaine, which makes *Tiger Woods 2004* control system a stroke of genius. You push the pad back to generate upswing and then nudge forward to control the downswing. Thus, when you get nervy, it gets all too easy to rush your shot and thin the ball through the green. It also cripples your thumbs.

Aside from the nicely psychological swing system, *Tiger 2004* is of the solid-but-ordinary school. EA seem to have decided that you, the GBA playing public, wouldn't be able to get your handheld-sized minds around anything too complex – and options have been cut down accordingly. Hitting draws or fades doesn't feel difficult or different enough to encourage the effort, and as the maps are often inaccurate, they're often not worth the bother anyway.

The makings of an excellent golf game are here – the types of competition, the courses available, the comprehensiveness of options – there's even a bit of humour. Sadly, the end result gets smothered under a sea of Americanisms (the green's a 'dancefloor') and a lack of variety in the gameplay. *TW2004* is golf-lite rather than great.



Although chipping from the rough is difficult, *Tiger Woods* makes it nearly impossible not to hit the ball straight. Weird.



Now there's where the ball should go. In actual fact it'll probably send us a postcard from Cuba in six months time.

"All the makings of an excellent golf game are here..."

ADVANCE OPINION

In the GBA golfing stakes this is the clubhouse leader, but only until *Mario Golf* arrives.

70%

DIRECTORY

Discover the joys of lesser spotted GBA delights like *Urban Yeti*. No, really



TOP 5 FIGHTING

1



STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3

From: **THQ** Link-up: **Yes**
A near flawless conversion of one of our all-time favourite fighters. And thankfully, no Kylie. **90%**

2



FINAL FIGHT ONE

From: **Ubisoft** Link-up: **Yes**
Decent side-scrolling brawler from when the MegaDrive ruled and we were young. Ish. **80%**

3



TEKKEN ADVANCE

From: **Namco** Link-up: **No**
The PlayStation's finest 3D hour gets its sprites but not its spirit flattened onto the GBA. **85%**

4



GEIKIDO ADVANCE

From: **Zoo** Link-up: **no**
Beat 'em up adventure hybrid that looks as fancy as a lady in a nice dress. Handheld game that packs a wallop. **86%**

5



FIRE PRO WRESTLING

From: **Bam!** Link-up: **No**
Options galore and a four-player mode make this the choice of the man in the girdle. Hmm. **84%**



CASTLEVANIA: HARMONY OF DISSONANCE

ACE LIGHTING
From: **BBC** Multimedia Link-up: **N**
Sub-standard platform junk 'based on' the TV show of the same name. **49%**

ADVANCE WARS
From: **Nintendo** Link-up: **Y**
Colourful strategizing that represents all that is best about GBA. **96%**

ADVANCE WARS 2
From: **Nintendo** Link-up: **Y**
Bigger and more beautiful than the first game, AW2 is a gaming WMD. **93%**

AGGRESSIVE INLINE
From: **Acclaim** Link-up: **N**
Passable, rather than inspiring, this is a lacklustre roller-skating sim. **69%**

ALADDIN
From: **Capcom** Link-up: **N**
The GBA version of an ancient console hit, Aladdin is young fun. **63%**

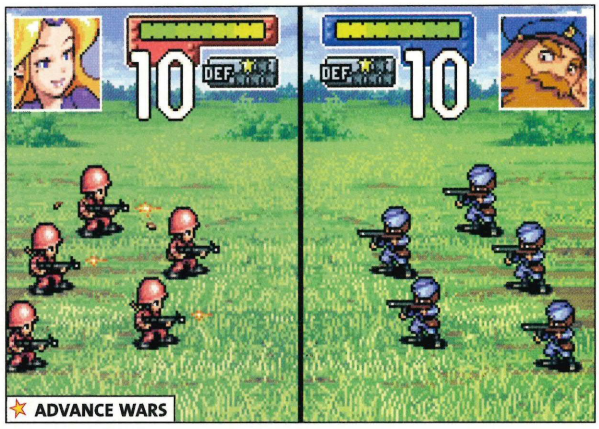
ALIENATORS EVOLUTION
From: **Activision** Link-up: **N**
Shallow climbing, running, key-finding melee. Sci-Fi heads only. **63%**

AN AMERICAN TAIL FIEVAL'S GOLD RUSH
From: **Swing!** Link-up: **N**
Rank controls, a pensionable concept and a mouse in a cowboy hat. **34%**

ARMY MEN OPERATION GREEN
From: **3DO** Link-up: **Y**
Isometric toy-soldiering with heaps of different weapons and vehicles. **69%**

ATARI ANNIVERSARY ADVANCE
From: **Atari** Link-up: **N**
These dusty OAP pastimes stand the test of time well. **81%**

ATLANTIS THE LOST EMPIRE
From: **THQ** Link-up: **N**
Another addition to the GBA tide of dull platforming games. **55%**



ADVANCE WARS

ATV QUAD POWER RACING
From: **Acclaim** Link-up: **Y**
Dreadful off-road racer with bad handling, graphics and other stuff. **36%**

BATMAN VENGEANCE
From: **Ubisoft** Link-up: **N**
Slicker than The Penguin and sexier than Catwoman. This is super hero heaven. **87%**

BATTLE BOTS: BEYOND THE BATTLEBOX
From: **Vivendi** Link-up: **Y**
A poor man's Robot Wars, but still a mostly playable offering. **60%**

BLACK BELT CHALLENGE
From: **Xicat** Link-up: **N**
This tidy dwarven bust-'em-up has cult hit written all over it. **78%**

BLENDER BROTHERS
From:**Atari** Link-up: **N**
Sweet RPG elements plus a tasty multi-player mode. **80%**

BOMBERMAN TOURNAMENT
From: **Activision** Link-up: **Y**
One of the all-time multiplayer puzzler greats. **82%**

BOULDERDASH EX
From: **Kemco** Link-up: **Y**
Gem-bagging, rock-dodging, puzzler with strong gameplay. Top hole! **79%**

BOXING FEVER
From: **THQ** Link-up: **Y**
Good looking, but overly simplistic boxing action. Average. **54%**

BREATH OF FIRE
From: **Ubisoft** Link-up: **Y**
Showing its years a little, but a solid and magnificently long adventure. **79%**

BRITNEY'S DANCE BEAT
From: **Ubisoft** Link-up: **Y**
Britney. Dancing. In miniature. Just for you. What more could you want? **61%**

BROKEN SWORD THE SHADOW OF THE TEMPLARS
From: **BAM!** Link-up: **N**
Old-school 2D adventure fun and timely cerebral refreshment. **91%**

BUBBLE BOBBLE OLD AND NEW
From: **Empire** Link-up: **Y**
A couple of dinosaurs, a mound of bubbles and a bunch of dino jumping. Great. **90%**

CAESAR'S PALACE
From: **THQ** Link-up: **N**
Gambling without money. Dull and pointless. **15%**

CASPER
From: **Microids** Link-up: **N**
An enjoyable ghostly romp in the Lemmings puzzler mould. **75%**

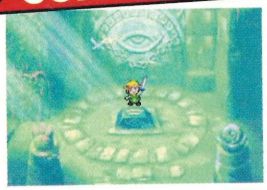
CASTLEVANIA HARMONY OF DISSONANCE
From: **Konami** Link-up: **N**
Smart vampire-fest for the gamer with a gothic bent. **86%**

CHESSMASTER
From: **Ubisoft** Link-up: **Y**
Solid dependable chessmanship, which is earnest and oh so serious. **76%**

CHUCHU ROCKET
From: **Sega** Link-up: **Y**
Engrossing mouse and rocket puzzler that rocks in two-player. **90%**

CONNECT COR!

The best five games in the in GBA/Gamecube connectivity stakes. According to us.



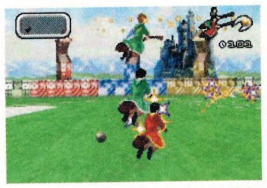
LEGEND OF ZELDA: A LINK TO THE PAST

Publisher: **Nintendo**
Requires: **GBA, GBA/GC Link Cable**
The GBA game enables a second player to join in the GC adventure as Tingle, a sprite who looks like a cursor. Much better than it sounds.



SPLINTER CELL

Publisher: **Ubisoft**
Requires: **GBA, GBA/GC Link Cable**
As well as some uploadable GBA levels, GC owners can use the GBA to provide an overhead vector-map and, here's a boon, use the GBA to remotely detonate 'sticky' bombs.



HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS

Publisher: **EA**
Requires: **GBA, GBA/GC Link Cable**
Harry fans can unlock secret areas in both the GC and GBA adventures, as well as downloading an altogether thrilling slide puzzle.



METROID PRIME

Publisher: **Nintendo**
Requires: **GBA, GBA/GC Link Cable**
Finish *Metroid Prime* and you'll be able to unlock the original NES version of *Metroid* on the GC's *Metroid Fusion*. There's an extra suit for Samus up for grabs too.



RAYMAN 3: HOODLUM HAVOC

Publisher: **Ubisoft**
Requires: **GBA, GBA/GC Link Cable**
Ultra impressive collection of extra goodies including ten new maps, a further boss battle and an all new four-player challenge (which requires two GBA's).

COLIN MCRAE 2.0

From: **Ubisoft** Link-up: **Y**
A fine rally title with added difficulty and extra hardness. Tyring. 81%

COLUMNS CROWN

From: **Sega** Link-up: **Y**
Lord alive, more Tetris-alike puzzling. Seen it, done it before. 70%

COUNTER TERRORISM SPECIAL FORCES

From: **LSP** Link-up: **Y**
Top piece of palm-gripped actioneering. Simple blasting fun. 82%

CRASH BANDICOOT XS

From: **Vivendi** Link-up: **Y**
Great-looking GBA debut for PS2's fox-faced bounder. 81%

CRASH BANDICOOT 2: N-TRANCED

From: **Vivendi** Link-up: **Y**
You seen this sort of platform thing before, but few do it better. 81%

CREATURES

From: **Vivendi** Link-up: **Y**
This artificial Intelligence sim is repetitive but fascinating. 80%

CRUIS'N VELOCITY

From: **Midway** Link-up: **N**
A fraction of the fun of GT Advance or Mario Kart. Dull central. 38%

DAREDEVIL

From: **THQ** Link-up: **N**
Movie clip and Marvel art extras can't save this scrolling beat 'em up. 54%

DARK ARENA

From: **THQ** Link-up: **Y**
By-the-numbers first-person shootin', entertaining enough. 79%

DAVE MIRRA 3 FREESTYLE BMX

From: **Acclaim** Link-up: **Y**
11 huge, good-looking levels and a top soundtrack. Very good. 76%

DEFENDER OF THE CROWN

From: **Metro 3D** Link-up: **Y**
A knights and castles-set strategy game of some distinction. 68%

DEXTER'S LAB

From: **Bam!** Link-up: **N**
A great little platform collect-'em-up with a neat isometric perspective. 82%

DINOTOPA THE TIMESTONE PIRATES

From: **TDK** Link-up: **Y**
Stone-age privateering platformer which is OK for the younger gamer. 68%

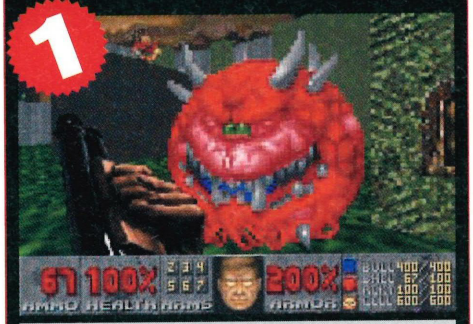
DISNEY'S THE JUNGLE BOOK 2

From: **Ubisoft** Link-up: **N**
Family-skewed pleasurement with a distinctly non-violent bent. 50%

DISNEY'S LILO & STITCH

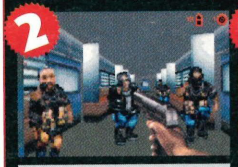
From: **Ubisoft** Link-up: **N**
Cute as a baby-cuddling a kitten but a challenge to the hairiest gamer. 79%

TOP 5 SHOOTERS



1 DOOM 2

From: **Activision** Link-up: **Yes**
Superb conversion of an all time-classic shooter, complete with top two-player mode. 90%



2 ECKS VS SEVER 2

From: **Bam!** Link-up: **Yes**
The 'other' great fps series on GBA posits you as Ecks and your mate as evil Sever. Plays very good cop. 90%



3 SPLINTER CELL

From: **Ubisoft**
Link-up: **With GC**
Great gameplay which creeps up behind you to elevate this onto the GB 'A'- list. 84%



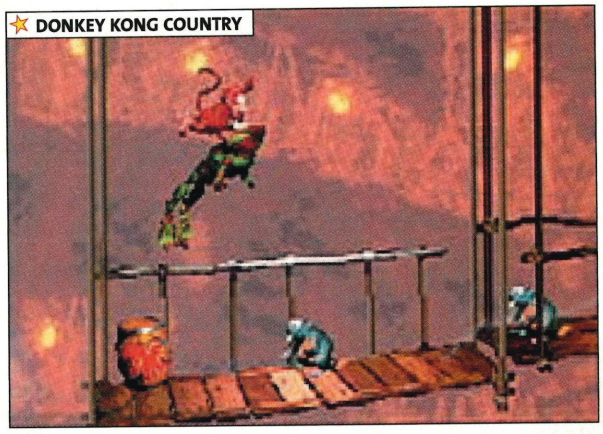
4 DUKE NUKEM ADVANCE

From: **Take 2** Link-up: **No**
Buxom, blonde but basic fps which bounces along to some nice end-of-the-pier humour. A fittingly regal outing for the Duke. 80%



5 CT: SPECIAL FORCES

From: **LSP** Link-up: **Yes**
Metal Slug-a-like that's way above your average common and garden shooter. Nice graphics, cool sounds and tooled-up blasting. 82%



DONKEY KONG COUNTRY

DISNEY'S MAGICAL QUEST

From: **Nintendo** Link-up: **N**
Wholesome platforming fancy that'll put a short-lived smile on your face. Not quite magic. 64%

DISNEY'S PETER PAN RETURN TO NEVER LAND

From: **Ubisoft** Link-up: **N**
The ever-youthful Master Pan's exploits are a mite on the dull side. 62%

DISNEY PRINCESS

From: **THQ** Link-up: **N**
A collection of Princess-themed games from various Disney hits. 70%

DISNEY SPORTS SKATEBOARDING

From: **Konami** Link-up: **Y**
Mickey Mouse and mates go all Tony Hawk in an attempt to coolify. 58%

DONALD DUCK ADVANCE

From:: **Ubisoft** Link-up: **N**
A nice-looking, Duck-jumping, collecting endeavour. 69%

DONKEY KONG COUNTRY

From: **Nintendo** Link-up: **Y**
DKC without any extras or add-ons. Recommended only to newcomers. 80%

DOOM

From: **Activision** Link-up: **Y**
A faithful version of the daddy of first-person shooters. Pure brilliance. 93%

DOOM II

From: **Activision** Link-up: **Y**
Tough, challenging shooter with an astonishing multiplayer option. 90%



CRASH BANDICOOT

DOWNFORCE

From: **Titus** Link-up: **Y**
Surprisingly goodish F1-alike racer. Thumb-burningly nippy. 75%

DRAGON BALL Z LEGACY OF GOKU

From: **Atari** Link-up: **Y**
With more work, this RPG could have been great. A shame. 55%

DRAGON BALL Z LEGACY OF GOKU 2

From: **Atari** Link-up: **Y**
Better than its middling predecessor, but nowhere near Golden Sun. 60%

DRIVEN

From: **Bam!** Link-up: **Y**
This isometric racer is a great racing alternative to V Rally. 83%

DRIVER 2

From: **Atari** Link-up: **N**
A PS legend but GBA accident. A huge disappointment. 48%

DR MUTO

From: **Midway** Link-up: **N**
Mutating doctor action for those who like formulaic platforming. 57%

DROOPY'S OPEN TENNIS

From: **LSP** Link-up: **Y**
A remarkably pleasing bat 'n' baller that's surprisingly sturdy to play. 82%

DIRECTORY



DUKE NUKEM ADVANCE
From: **Take 2** Link-up: **Y**
Basic but enjoyable first-person shooter with lashings of humour **80%**

DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS EYE OF THE BEHOLDER
From: **Atari** Link-up: **N**
Fails to deliver on the promise of the licence. Miss it. **41%**

EARTHWORM JIM
From: **THQ** Link-up: **N**
What was once a stylish platformer... But it now looks rather dumb. **60%**

ECKS VS SEVER
From: **Bam!** Link-up: **Y**
As a single-player first-person-shooter, this is great stuff. **88%**

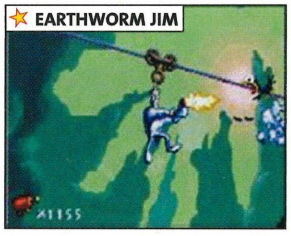
ECKS VS SEVER 2
From: **Bam!** Link-up: **Y**
One of the GBA's essential titles. Arguably, the best fps on the GBA. **90%**

EGGO MANIA
From: **Tecmo** Link-up: **Y**
A Tetris variant incorporating a rotating egg man. Mostly uninteresting. **75%**

ESPN BASS TOURNAMENT
From: **Konami** Link-up: **Y**
Nice looking um... fish and water? Leaves you waiting for a bite. **62%**

ESPN FINAL ROUND GOLF 2002
From: **Konami** Link-up: **Y**
A decent enough golfing sim, if a little too dry to be essential. **65%**

ESPN INTERNATIONAL WINTER SPORTS
From: **Konami** Link-up: **Y**
Numerous sub-zero sports featured, only one of which is a button basher. A nice change from the norm. **77%**



ESPN X GAMES SKATEBOARDING
From: **Konami** Link-up: **Y**
A boarding game that will make you more angry than gnarly. **60%**

EXTREME GHOSTBUSTERS
From: **Wanadoo** Link-up: **Y**
Not a terrible platformer by any means, but horribly unoriginal. **55%**

F1 2002
From: **EA** Link-up: **Y**
An attempt at hyper-speed racing that proves too difficult to play. **55%**

F-14 TOMCAT
From: **THQ** Link-up: **Y**
This flight-sim is complex, clever and involving, but use a magnifier. **72%**

FIFA 2003
From: **EA** Link-up: **Y**
The pitch is small, action fiddly. Not the beautiful game. **61%**

FILA DECATHLON
From: **THQ** Link-up: **Y**
Old-school button-thwacking athletics game, lacks substance. **65%**

FINAL FIGHT ONE
From: **Ubisoft** Link-up: **Y**
A decent side-scrolling beat-'em-up on a hand-held. Huzzah! **80%**

TOP 5 RACING

1



MARIO KART: SUPER CIRCUIT
From: **Nintendo** Link-up: **Yes**
Not only the most fun racer ever but – behind the cutesy exterior – one of the toughest. **95%**

2



F-ZERO: MAXIMUM VELOCITY
From: **Nintendo** Link-up: **Yes**
Much-loved future racer that will wear the skin from your shoulder-button fingers. **89%**

3



V RALLY 3
From: **Atari** Link-up: **No**
Atari's wonder racer sticks two-fingers up at GBA doubters. A startlingly complete sim **85%**

4



GT ADVANCE 2
From: **THQ** Link-up: **Yes**
The GBA's own *Gran Turismo*, a tidy rally title with a more than justly rev-vered two-player game. **84%**

5



LEGO RACERS 2
From: **Lego** Link-up: **Yes**
Mario Kart clone that bricks it away from the rest of a crowded field. Plenty to do and much fun to be had. **79%**

FINDING NEMO
From: **THQ** Link-up: **N**
Gorgeous undersea romp for those of younger years. **75%**

FIRE PRO WRESTLING
From: **Bam!** Link-up: **Y**
Hundreds of options make this the choice of men who like spandex. **84%**

FLINTSTONES BIG TROUBLE IN BEDROCK
From: **Swing!** Link-up: **N**
Terrible, repetitive platform borgas-motron. Leave this well alone. **23%**

FORTRESS
From: **THQ** Link-up: **N**
An ungainly twist on the Tetris theme. Nice idea, dodgy execution. **64%**

FROGGER ADVANCE THE GREAT QUEST
From: **Konami** Link-up: **N**
Not Frogger at all, but a run-of-the-mill platformer. 'Oppit! **44%**

FROGGER'S ADVENTURES: TEMPLE OF THE FROG
From: **Konami** Link-up: **N**
Frogger's good looks and simple gameplay make this appealing. **78%**

F-ZERO MAXIMUM VELOCITY
From: **Nintendo** Link-up: **Y**
Takes Ninty's futuristic racer a step on. A lightning-quick beaut. **89%**

GAME & WATCH GALLERY ADVANCE
From: **Nintendo** Link-up: **N**
An updated old-school classic that's still simple, but even more addictive. **70%**

GEKIDO ADVANCE KINTARO'S REVENGE
From: **Zoo** Link-up: **Y**
A highly engrossing beat-'em-up/ adventure hybrid. **86%**

GO! GO! BECKHAM
From: **Rage** Link-up: **Y**
Deeply cute Mario-esque treatment of footiball. One for Beckham fans. **70%**

GODZILLA DOMINATION
From: **Atari** Link-up: **N**
An uninspiring by-the-numbers beat-'em-up with a top multiplayer option. No wonder he's green. **49%**

GOLDEN SUN
From: **Nintendo** Link-up: **Y**
Stunning RPGism that's as dense as a home console adventure. **94%**

GRADIUS ADVANCE
From: **Konami** Link-up: **N**
A slick blast from the past that puts most shooters to shame. **90%**

GREMLINS STRIPE VS GIZMO
From: **Wanadoo** Link-up: **N**
Don't play this after midnight... Actually, don't play it at all. **54%**

GROOVY GAMES
From: **Vivendi** Link-up: **N**
A Barbie-tied in collection of games that really do scream 'young'. **67%**

GT ADVANCE CHAMPIONSHIP
From: **THQ** Link-up: **Y**
The first and best 'realistic' racer on the GBA. Tons of tracks to unlock. **87%**

GT ADVANCE 2
From: **THQ** Link-up: **Y**
A very acceptable companion game to the original GT Advance. **84%**

GUILTY GEAR X ADVANCE EDITION
From: **BBI** Link-up: **Y**
A faithful but not good translation of the original 2D battler. **50%**

HARRY POTTER AND THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE
From: **EA** Link-up: **N**
Like the books, a gripping adventure packed with class moments. **86%**

HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS
From: **EA** Link-up: **N**
Very, very pleasing (but easy) rendering of JK's speccy wiz. **82%**

HOT WHEELS BURNIN' RUBBER
From: **THQ** Link-up: **Y**
No Mario beater but not without charm. 20 tracks and four modes. **72%**

THIS MONTH'S MOST PLAYED

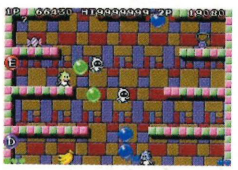
It's not all sitting around an office playing GBA games, you know. Sometimes we go home and play GBA games too.



1. SUPER MONKEY BALL JR
Hey hey, the bonus levels are eating into our sleep. What kind of monkey-ish bonus is that?



2. ADVANCE WARS 2
Did we make tipping this brain-burster look easy? Thought not. Ten pages of sheer pain.



3. BUBBLE BOBBLE
Two full grown – if not plain old adults – screaming, 'grab the bleedin' brolley!'

HOT WHEELS VELOCITY X
From: **THQ** Link-up: **Y**
Fun, and tougher than you might think. You could do a lot worse. 75%

INCREDIBLE HULK
From: **Vivendi** Link-up: **Y**
Pound for pound, the best Hulk game on any console. Smashing action. 81%

INSPECTOR GADGET ADVANCE MISSION
From: **LSP** Link-up: **N**
And Inspector Gadget's first GBA outing is... a pedestrian platformer. 70%

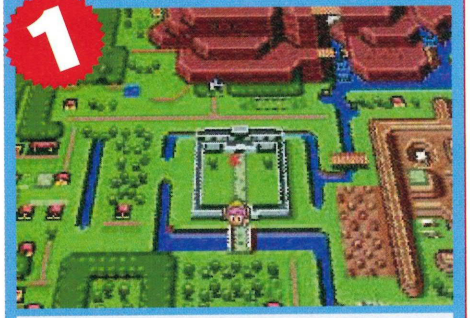
INTERNATIONAL KARATE +
From: **Ignition** Link-up: **Y**
Simplistic fighting for defiant retro-heads only. 54%

INVADER
From: **Xicat** Link-up: **N**
By-numbers vertical scrolling shooter in the Xevious mould. Samey stuff. 60%

IRIDION 3D
From: **Vivendi** Link-up: **N**
The 3D graphics are quite smart but it plays like a dog. Disappointing. 68%

TOP 5 ADVENTURE

1



ZELDA: A LINK TO THE PAST
From: **Nintendo** Link-up: **Yes**
Half-new, half-old, all-pointy eared, all-great addition to the *Zelda* family. 92%

2



POKEMON RUBY/SAPPHIRE
From: **Nintendo** Link-up: **Yes**
The game of the craze is back – and better then ever. Doubters beware. 94%

3



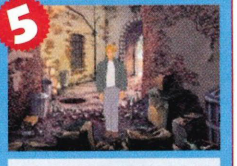
FINAL FANTASY TACTICS
From: **Nintendo** Link-up: **Yes**
The first of the *FF* series to hit the GBA, but already as good as they come. 91%

4

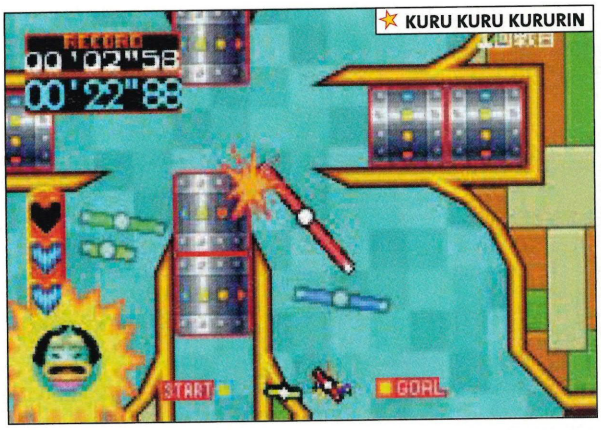


GOLDEN SUN 2: THE LOST AGE
From: **Nintendo** Link-up: **Yes**
Dense RPG that like its predecessor would put many a home console game to shade. One of the brightest GBA titles ever. 91%

5



BROKEN SWORD: SHADOW OF THE TEMPLARS
From: **Bam!** Link-up: **No**
Cerebral entertainment of the ye olde old school variety. And funny too. If your thoughtful graphical adventuring ain't broke... 91%



IRIDION II
From: **Vivendi** Link-up: **N**
A reasonably presented top-down scrolling blaster of the old school. 48%

INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER
From: **Konami Link-up: Y**
Flashy football with intelligent passing that plays sweetly. 80%

JACKIE CHAN ADVENTURES LEGEND OF THE DARK HAND
From: **Activision** Link-up: **N**
Walk right, hit blokes, make them disappear, hit new blokes. Ok. Ish. 59%

JAMES BOND: 007 NIGHTFIRE
From: **EA** Link-up: **Y**
By-the-numbers first-person shooter. Rather plain with dumb baddies. 68%

JAZZ JACKRABBIT
From: **Jaleco** Link-up: **N**
This big-eared scroller languishes in the good, but not great, camp. 73%

JIMMY NEUTRON BOY GENIUS
From: **THQ** Link-up: **N**
A game sorely lacking in challenge. Only fans need be interested. 57%

JONNY MOSELEY MAD TRIX
From: **3Do** Link-up: **N**
Unimpressive skiing 'n' trix yawn-bucket. Leave it on the shelf. 59%

JURASSIC PARK III: DINO ATTACK
From: **Konami** Link-up: **N**
Gruesome controls mar this otherwise reasonable diversion. 68%

JURASSIC PARK III: DNA FACTOR
From: **Konami** Link-up: **N**
Yuck! If you enjoy playing shoddy games, this is for you. 21%

JURASSIC PARK III: PARK BUILDER
From: **Konami** Link-up: **N**
This Theme Park-inspired title is limited but tough to put down. 78%

KAO THE KANGAROO
From: **Titus** Link-up: **N**
Another by-the-numbers platformer. As average as the GBA gets. 29%

KARNAAJ RALLY
From: **Jaleco** Link-up: **N**
Stoopid name, rather good game. Great racing with nice visuals. 79%

KELLY SLATER'S PRO SURFER
From: **Activision** Link-up: **Y**
Essentially Tony Hawk's on a never-ending half-pipe. Not convincing. 78%

KIEN
From: **GMX** Link-up: **N**
A completely weirdo mix of RPG and platformer which doesn't come off. 69%

KING OF FIGHTERS EX
From: **SNK** Link-up: **Y**
Good-looking bruiser let down because because it's too damn easy. 63%

KIRBY: NIGHTMARE IN DREAM LAND
From: **Nintendo** Link-up: **Y**
Sparkly looking day-glo cuteness and platform brilliance to rival Mario. 89%

KLONOA EMPIRE OF DREAMS
From: **Namco** Link-up: **N**
Its kidish kitty in trainers vibe belies the brain-gnawing tricksiness. Smart. 88%

KONAMI KRAZY RACERS
From: **Konami** Link-up: **Y**
A decent cutesy racer, albeit one that lacks the depth of Mario Kart. 85%

KURU KURU KURURIN
From: **Nintendo** Link-up: **Y**
Guide a rotating stick around mazes without touching the sides. Ace. 90%

LADY SIA
From: **THK** Link-up: **N**
Beautifully presented platforming action with hand-drawn visuals. We hope to Sia again. 80%

LEGENDS OF WRESTLING 2
From: **Acclaim** Link-up: **N**
Shocking controls and a ring full of doddery old timers. Not gripping. 39%

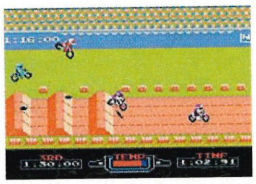
LEGO BIONICLE
From: **Lego** Link-up: **N**
LEGO is dragged into 3D, but it hardly seems worth the effort. 54%

LEGO BIONICLE: TALES OF THE TOHUNGA
From: **Lego** Link-up: **N**
Fun and big adventure, but it's hardly groundbreaking. 72%

LEGO FOOTBALL MANIA
From: **Lego** Link-up: **Y**
There's football. There's amusing comedy football. And this. 16%

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO?

They should have been on our A-Z, instead they're just AWOL



THE E-CARD READER
First mooted back in 2001, tipped for greatness by us in 2002, and seemingly buried in a big hole for odd ideas in 2003, we wondered whether this cult add on for the GBA would ever hit the UK. Already imported en masse by Nintendo-freaks, the E-Card Reader allows mini-games and various extras for GBA and GC titles to be scanned in from small trading cards (purchased separately, natch). Fortunately for non-loaded readers, rumour has it that the E-Card reader will finally hit Britain next Easter. Now there's a Brucie bonus.

LEGO ISLAND XTREME STUNTS
From:**Lego** Link-up: **N**
Fairly rubbishy looking and rather too easy to keep an adult brain jazzed. 54%

LEGO ISLAND 2
From: **Lego** Link-up: **N**
Nothing outstanding, but everyone will enjoy this comical adventure. 80%

LEGO RACERS 2
From: **Lego** Link-up: **N**
Very slick and enjoyable karting game, with plenty to do. 79%

MANIC MINER
From: **Jester** Link-up: **N**
Retro platforming in the make one mistake and you die mould. 60%

MANIC RACERS ADVANCE
From: **Konami** Link-up: **Y**
Side-on racing anyone? You'd have to be a complete maniac to buy this. 36%

MARIO KART SUPER CIRCUIT
From: **Nintendo** Link-up: **Y**
The most fun racer ever. Mario Kart's cuteness hides a steely heart. 95%

MAT HOFFMAN'S PRO BMX
From: **Activision** Link-up: **Y**
Not quite as much fun as the board-based Tony Hawk's, but enjoyable. 79%

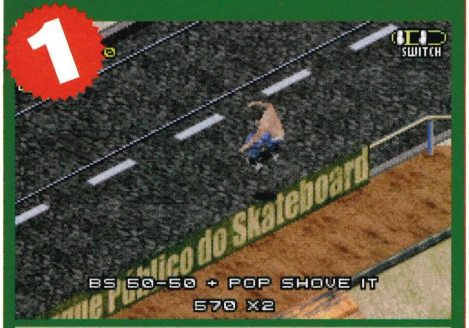
MAT HOFFMAN'S PRO BMX 2
From: **Activision** Link-up: **Y**
Two-wheeled japes aplenty, with a slightly steep learning curve. 79%

MECH PLATOON
From: **Kemco** Link-up: **Y**
A fantastic strategy game second only to Advance Wars. Complicated without being too fiddly. 90%

MEDABOTS AX ROKUSHO VERSION
From: **Ubi Soft** Link-up: **Y**
Pokémon meets Robot Wars meets Megaman... But a disappointment. 60%

DIRECTORY

TOP 5 SPORT



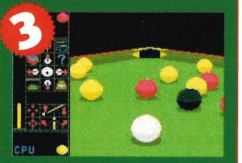
1

TONY HAWK'S 3 PRO SKATER
From: **Activision** Link-up: **Yes**
Like an extreme sports Torville and Dean, this'll have you tricks-ing across your GBA screen. 93%



2

VIRTUA TENNIS
From: **Atari** Link-up: **Yes**
Simple two-button tennis that somehow feels more authentic then Serena Williams' bottom. 85%



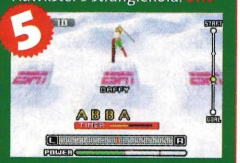
3

ARCHIE MCLEAN'S POOL
From: **Ignition** Link-up: **Yes**
Right on cue pool title that goes close to breaking the Hawkster's stranglehold. 81%



4

STEVEN GERRARD'S TOTAL SOCCER
From: **Ubisoft** Link-up: **Yes**
Bugged but still the best soccer game on GBA. Less midfield general, more, er, Robbie Savage. 88%



5

ESPN INTERNATIONAL WINTER SPORTS
From: **Konami** Link-up: **No**
Sub-zero sporting fancies – surprisingly few of which involve random thumb-bashing. Cool. 77%



MEDAL OF HONOUR UNDERGROUND
From: **EA** Link-up: **Y**
A big brown misery of a game. Where did it all go wrong? 44%

MEGAMAN BATTLE NETWORK
From: **Atari** Link-up: **N**
Imagine taking all the bad bits from a sub-par RPG. To be honest, it's dull. 35%

MEGAMAN BATTLE NETWORK 2
From: **Atari** Link-up: **N**
An RPG/Pokémon-light world that just doesn't work at all. 42%

MEGAMAN ZERO
From: **Capcom** Link-up: **N**
Looks nice, and it's challenging to say the least. Often unfairly so. 70%



MEGAMAN ZERO 2
From: **Capcom** Link-up: **N**
More of the same side-scrolling smashing action. Adequate. 68%

METROID FUSION
From: **Nintendo** Link-up: **N**
Arcade action fused with some corking new ideas. Fantastic fun. 85%

MICRO MACHINES
From: **Atari** Link-up: **Y**
The dinky racers transfer superbly to the GBA. Suitably daffy tussling. 83%

MIDNIGHT CLUB STREET RACING
From: **Rebellion** Link-up: **N**
Top down 2D racing that's too much trial-and-error to be successful. 60%

MIDWAY'S GREATEST ARCADE HITS
From: **Midway** Link-up: **N**
Okay, they look crap, but these are ideal whip-out-'n'-play tests. 78%

MIKE TYSON BOXING
From: **Ubisoft** Link-up: Y
Half-arcade, half-management boxing title that doesn't convince 53%

MINORITY REPORT
From: **Activision** Link-up: **N**
Gun-packing platformer for fans of the flick only. And there aren't many. 68%

MONSTER FORCE
From: **Vivendi** Link-up: **N**
A nice enough-looking, kiddy-horror with just a dollop of charm. 64%

MONSTER TRUCK MADNESS
From: **THQ** Link-up: **Y**
A half-decent racer. Pity the other half is so bog-standard. 54%

MONSTERS INC
From: **THQ** Link-up: **N**
A big hairy side-scrolling misery. Platforming by numbers. 42%

MORTAL KOMBAT ADVANCE
From: **Midway** Link-up: **N**
The tired Kombatants get another knuckle-dragging run out. Why? 23%

MORTAL KOMBAT DEADLY ALLIANCE
From: **Midway** Link-up: **N**
Big ugly characters, rancid animation and awful gameplay. Nuff said. 17%

MOTO GP
From: **THQ** Link-up: **Y**
Bi-wheeled racing with old fashioned handling, yet worth a gander. 68%

MOTO RACER ADVANCE
From: **Ubi Soft** Link-up: **Y**
Simplistic gameplay, perhaps, but a fine quick-fix arcade racer. 87%

MUNCH'S ODDYSEE
From: **THQ** Link-up: **N**
There's very little to chuckle at in this slightly tedious adventure yarn. 56%

NAMCO MUSEUM
From: **Namco** Link-up: **N**
Four games good for their time, but their time was 20 years ago. 50%

NO RULES GET PHAT
From: **TDK** Link-up: **N**
Feeble platformer that's a million miles away from Tony Hawk's. 35%

PAC-MAN COLLECTION
From: **Namco** Link-up: **N**
Four Pac-Man themed games on one cart, a retro treat. 90%

PHALANX
From: **Kemco** Link-up: **N**
An old-skool 2D shooter resurrected for the small screen. But why? 81%

PINBALL ADVANCE
From: **ZOO** Link-up: **N**
The nonsensical fancy that is 'pin and ball' creaks its way into the GBA. 39%

PINBALL OF THE DEAD
From: **Kemco** Link-up: **N**
Horror-themed flippering with lovely presentation. The best on GBA. 70%

PINK PANTHER PINKADELIC PURSUIT
From: **Wanadoo** Link-up: **N**
Great fun and appeallingly cute, but just a platformer. 64%

PITFALL THE MAYAN ADVENTURE
From:**Activision** Link-up: **N**
Another mediocre rehash of this ancient platformer. 70%

PLANET MONSTERS
From: **Titus** Link-up: **N**
A maze-based squish-'em-up, Planet Monsters is a fast and competent. 78%

POCKET MUSIC
From: **Rage** Link-up: **N**
Hardly up to studio standard, but an amusing distraction all the same. 83%

POKEMON RUBY AND SAPPHIRE
From: **Nintendo** Link-up: **Y**
Improved fights, epic story. A massive universe of a game. 94%

POLLY POCKET
From: **Vivendi** Link-up: **N**
Six games feature the alliteratively named heroine, girl gamers rejoice. 70%

POWERPUFF GIRLS MOJO JOJO A-GO-GO
From: **Bam!** Link-up: **N**
Horizontally scrolling shooter starring the cartoon chicks. A brave attempt at something different. 62%

PREHISTORIK MAN
From: **Midway** Link-up: **N**
Platformers are two-a-penny on the GBA, but this is above ordinary. 83%

PRO BEACH SOCCER
From: **Wanadoo** Link-up: **Y**
It might irk puritanical football heads, but this simplistic kickabout delivers fun in the backlit-sun. 75%

PUYO PUYO
From: **Sega** Link-up: **Y**
A competent but rather arcane puzzler. Fine-but-dull. 75%

RAMPAGE PUZZLE ATTACK
From: **Midway** Link-up: **N**
One of those puzzler ideas that seems great on paper only. 55%

RAYMAN ADVANCE
From: **Ubi Soft** Link-up: **Y**
Superb to look at, but it plays like every other platformer ever... 80%

RAYMAN 3: HOODLUM HAVOC
From: **Ubi Soft** Link-up: **Y**
Smart platforming stuff, but haven't we seen it's like before? 79%

READY 2 RUMBLE ROUND 2
From: **THQ** Link-up: **N**
Wretched. Nasty visuals and shallow gameplay make this forgettable. 32%

REIGN OF FIRE
From: **Bam!** Link-up: **N**
Nice ideas, but a blaster that gets smothered in a sea of mediocrity. 57%

RIPPING FRIENDS
From: **Nintendo** Link-up: **Y**
The single-player challenge is rather easy, but will keep you laughing. 70%

ROBOT WARS ADVANCED DESTRUCTION
From: **BBC** Link-up: **Y**
Fans of the BBC TV show will have a good time with this battle game. 80%

ROBOT WARS: EXTREME DESTRUCTION
From: **BBC** Link-up: **Y**
Make your own robo, then make it do battle. Bearded men not included. 76%



ROCK 'N' ROLL RACING
From: **Vivendi** Link-up: **N**
More Micro Machines-style action, but that's not a bad thing. 72%

ROCKET POWER: THE DREAM SCHEME
From: **THQ** Link-up: **N**
This skateboarding platformer has some ideas, but ultimately annoys. 59%

RUGRATS CASTLE CAPERS
From: **THQ** Link-up: **N**
If you want a good blast, look elsewhere. A real chore to play. 75%

SCOOBY DOO MYSTERY MANSION
From: **THQ** Link-up: **N**
A great side-scrolling platformer starring the ever-popular hound. 75%

SCOOBY-DOO CYBER CHASE
From: **THQ** Link-up: **N**
Fails to capture the essence of the show, but there are cool mini-games. 54%

SCOOBY DOO THE MOVIE
From: **THQ** Link-up: **N**
You'd have to be a remarkably forgiving fan to mess with this drivel. 37%

SCRABBLE
From: **Ubi Soft** Link-up: **N**
You can't use swear words, but it has a built-in dictionary. 75%

SECRET AGENT BARBIE
From: **Vivendi** Link-up: **N**
Barbie makes like 007 with half-decent results. But are you man enough to be seen playing it? 64%

SHAUN PALMER'S PRO SNOWBOARDER
From: **Activision** Link-up: **N**
Not terrible, just not great. With Tony Hawk's doing the rounds. 60%

SHINING SOUL
From: **Atari** Link-up: **N**
Diet-Role Playing Game that focuses heavily on fighting. 67%

SHREK HASSLE AT THE CASTLE
From: **TDK** Link-up: **N**
The strongest Shrek title available on the GBA. Still pedestrian, though. 61%

SMUGGLER'S RUN
From: **Take Two** Link-up: **N**
A shallow representation of the early PS2 mini-hit. Redefines dullness. 29%

SNOOD
From: **Digital** Link-up: **N**
Bust-a-Move with Snoods. Very middle-of-the-road. 58%

SONIC ADVANCE
From: **Atari** Link-up: **N**
As sprightly a platformer as you could want. Classic Sonic. 91%

SPEEDBALL 2
From: **Wanadoo** Link-up: **N**
The old Amiga classic. But this is nowhere as near as good. 60%

SPIDER-MAN THE MOVIE
From: **Activision** Link-up: **N**
The best Spider-Man title on the GBA yet. Great stuff. 90%

SPIDER-MAN MYSTERIO'S MENACE
From: **Activision** Link-up: **N**
This is fantastic stuff, offering tons of rock-hard levels. 90%

SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS SUPER SPONGE
From: **THQ** Link-up: **N**
Appaling platformer without any redeeming factors. Hate it. 20%

SPYRO: SEASONS OF ICE
From: **Vivendi** Link-up: **N**
Every bit as good – no, better, dammit – than the old PSone games. 89%

SPYRO 2: SEASON OF FLAME
From: **Vivendi** Link-up: **N**
How they managed to cram all this into the little GBA is anyone's guess. 91%

SSX TRICKY
From: **EA** Link-up: **Y**
A decent 'boarding game that is king of neither the tricking or the racing. 74%

STAR WARS 2 ATTACK OF THE CLONES
From: **THQ** Link-up: **N**
Takes the GBA to the depths of a Sarlacc pit. Shame. 44%

STAR WARS: JEDI POWER BATTLES
From: **Activision** Link-up: **Y**
Oh how we wanted this scrapper to be good. It's not though. 65%

STAR WARS 2: NEW DROID ARMY
From: **Activision** Link-up: **N**
Great-looking Star Wars fun with some nice touches. 73%

TOP 5 PLATFORM

1



MARIO ADVANCE 2
From: **Nintendo** Link-up: **Yes**
All back to '92 for a serving of the 'tash meister that has aged with Dame Judi Dench-type dignity. 94%

2



YOSHI'S ISLAND: MARIO ADVANCE 3
From: **Nintendo** Link-up: **Yes**
Will take a centre stage at the museum of handheld gaming, platforming excellence. When it opens. 95%

3



SONIC ADVANCE
From: **Atari** Link-up: **Yes**
To Sega's enormous credit this all new Sonic adventure is not only faster than anything else on the GBA, but twice as spikey. 91%

4



BANJO-KAZOOIE
From: **THQ** Link-up: **No**
As sexy a game as a scrolling, jumping, hitting adventurery yarn about a bear can be. Pure gameplay honey from turncoat Brit development studio, Rare. 91%

5



KIRBY: NIGHTMARE IN DREAMLAND
From: **Nintendo** Link-up: **Yes**
Sparkly day-goo brilliance imaginative enough to rival any of Mario's outings. Easy to play through but – weirdly enough – ingenious too. 89%



SUPER GHOULS 'N' GHOSTS

STAR X
From: **Bam!** Link-up: **Y**
A valiant but flawed attempt to compress Starfox onto the GBA. 54%

STEVEN GERRARD'S TOTAL SOCCER 2002
From: **Ubisoft** Link-up: **Y**
Not the prettiest soccer sim, but the most playable to hit the GBA. 88%

SUPER BLACK BASS
From: **Ubisoft** Link-up: **N**
Drab looking angler, that aspires towards realism. Fish off! 60%

SUPER BUBBLE POP
From: **Jaleco** Link-up: **N**
3D puzzler that's definitely no Tetris beater but playable enough. 47%

SUPER BUST-A-MOVE
From: **Activision** Link-up: **N**
One of the better puzzlers available on the GBA, especially in two-player. 86%

SUPER DODGEBALL ADVANCE
From: **Ubisoft** Link-up: **Y**
Ball game where points are scored by hurling it at the opposition. 85%

SUPER DROPZONE
From: **Ignition** Link-up: **Y**
Ancient Defender-clone with a jet packed chappy shooting aliens. 50%

SUPER GHOULS 'N' GHOSTS
From: **Capcom** Link-up: **N**
This Capcom classic is enjoyable – but only if you're a retro head. 75%

SUPER MARIO ADVANCE
From: **Nintendo** Link-up: **Y**
Not the all-new Mario game that everyone was hoping for, but OK. 89%

SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 2
From: **Nintendo** Link-up: **Y**
All back to '92 for the best 2D platformer ever. 94%

SUPER MONKEY BALL JR
From: **THQ** Link-up: **N**
A brilliant conversion of the Cube classic. So addictive, so frustrating. 87%

SUPER PUZZLE FIGHTER II TURBO
From: **Capcom** Link-up: **Y**
Not better than Bubble Bobble, but will keep balloon fanatics gripped. 79%

SUPER STREET FIGHTER 2 X REVIVAL
From: **THQ** Link-up: **Y**
Like having the arcade beat-'em-up in your pocket. Still great. 90%

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3
From: **THQ** Link-up: **Y**
The daddy of all beat-'em-ups. And a near-flawless conversion too. 91%

TANG TANG
From: **Take 2** Link-up: **Y**
Tang Tang is a monster of a game, a host of bygone classics spliced into one horribly wrong mutant puzzle cart. 45%

TARZAN: RETURN TO THE JUNGLE
From: **Activision** Link-up: **N**
Fairly predictable platforming fare featuring Disney's vine swinger. 52%

TEKKEN ADVANCE
From: **Namco** Link-up: **Y**
Sprites for polygons as the PS2's benchmark battler hits GBA. 85%

TETRIS WORLDS
From: **THQ** Link-up: **Y**
It's Tetris, but with the Russian stylings replaced by weird 'worlds'. 56%

THE HOBBIT
From: **Vivendi** Link-up: **Y**
A fun-while-it-lasts adventure, but it don't last that long. 72%

DIRECTORY

TOP 5 PUZZLE

1



ADVANCE WARS 2: BLACK HOLE RISING
From: **Nintendo** Link-up: **Yes**
So perfect, it's like playing a strategy game from the future. One to bore the grandkids with. 95%

2



WARIO WARE INC.
From: **Nintendo** Link-up: **No**
Nonsense mini-games which need to go for a quiet lie down. We're glad they didn't, though. 90%

3



SUPER MONKEY BALL JR
From: **THQ** Link-up: **No**
Marble Madness for monkeys. As good as it sounds, and the mini-games are deliciously bananas too. 85%

4



MECH PLATOON
From: **Konami** Link-up: **Yes**
Under-rated (ie. no-one bought it) Japanese mech strategy title, that shouldn't be left out to rust. 85%

5



BUBBLE BOBBLE
From: **Empire** Link-up: **Yes**
Two versions of the cutesy arcade classic plus a link-cable for £20? That's the deal of the century. Lovely, bubbly. 90%

THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN
From: **Activision** Link-up: **N**
B-list Marvel hero in pedestrian scrolling platform game shocker! 45%

THE IUSTICE LEAGUE: INJUSTICE FOR ALL
From: **THQ** Link-up: **Y**
DC comics trundles out heroes in this assured platforming title. 84%

THE LAND THAT TIME FORGOT
From: **Swing!** Link-up: **Y**
Scandalously dull platformer created off the back of a tired old license. 21%

THE LORD OF THE RINGS FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING
From: **Vivendi** Link-up: **Y**
Dull for very long periods, with slow fighting mixed in. 43%

THE LORD OF THE RINGS THE TWO TOWERS
From: **EA** Link-up: **Y**
It does what it does rather well. But it's just repetitive bludgeoning. 60%

THE LOST VIKINGS
From: **Vivendi** Link-up: **Y**
Above-average platformer that puts you in control of Vikings. 78%

THE MUMMY
From: **Ubisoft** Link-up: **N**
Dumbed down platformer aimed at 'the kids.' Maggot-ridden. 51%

THE SUM OF ALL FEARS
From: **Ubisoft** Link-up: **N**
A generic Rainbow Six clone with a filmic badge, but not too bad for it. 70%

THE WILD THORNBERRYS: CHIMP CHASE
From: **THQ** Link-up: **N**
Dubious collision detection in this ordinary platforming fare. 54%

THUNDERBIRDS
From: **SCi** Link-up: **Y**
All the craft are here for scrolling, shooting fun. Nostalgic joy. 67%

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR GOLF
From: **EA** Link-up: **Y**
Woods' a fine golfer, but this is one shoddy piece of gaming. 35%

TINY TOON ADVENTURES: BUSTER'S BAD DREAM
From: **Swing!** Link-up: **N**
Superior running, jumping and puzzle-solving fun. 68%

TINY TOON ADVENTURES: WACKY STACKERS
From: **Swing!** Link-up: **Y**
More Tetris deja vu, only this time with um... a pig in dungarees. 78%

TOCA: WORLD TOURING CARS
From: **Ubisoft** Link-up: **Y**
Rather too hard racer if all very nicely put together. 65%

TOM & JERRY IN INFURNAL ESCAPE
From: **Ubisoft** Link-up: **N**
Amusing to watch, not that great to actually play adventure. 58%

TOM AND JERRY THE MAGIC RING
From: **Ubisoft** Link-up: **N**
Tiresome running-and-hitting-people-with-things trial. Make it stop... 38%

TOMB RAIDER THE PROPHECY
From: **Ubisoft** Link-up: **N**
Lara's latest isn't terrible, but it's a lot of hard, tedious work. Sigh. 65%

TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX ROGUE SPEAR
From: **Ubisoft** Link-up: **Y**
Sneaky, sneaky catchy terrorist. Very good stealth 'em up. 88%

TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL
From: **Ubisoft** Link-up: **N**
Excellent visuals and a range of moves elevate this to the A-list. 84%

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2
From: **Activision** Link-up: **Y**
Still one of the best extreme sports titles to hit the GBA. 90%

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3
From: **Activision** Link-up: **Y**
Initially tough, but soon evolves into a nose grinding car plant of a game. 93%

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4
From: **Activision** Link-up: **Y**
The bomb-diggy. The mack-daddy. The best GBA skater by a mile. 95%

TOP GEAR GT
From: **Kemco** Link-up: **Y**
Racer that plays like a GBC title, only with slightly better graphics. 34%

TUROK EVOLUTION
From: **Acclaim** Link-up: **Y**
Limited and familiar action with the 'saurus assassin. A little predictable. Then a little more predictable. 66%

TREASURE PLANET
From: **Ubisoft** Link-up: **N**
Rather good adventure version of a very average cartoon film. 81%

URBAN YETI
From: **Telegames** Link-up: **Y**
You're a yeti in this bizarro mix of a GT Auto and retro arcade games. 77%

VIRTUA TENNIS
From: **Atari** Link-up: **Y**
Two-button arcade fun that's the best tennis on the GBA. 85%

VIRTUAL KASPAROV
From: **Titus** Link-up: **Y**
Manages to infuse the dusty world of chess with some entertainment. 82%

V-RALLY 3
From: **Infogrames** Link-up: **Y**
A stonking rally experience. This could well be the drive for you. 85%

WARIO LAND 4
From: **Nintendo** Link-up: **Y**
Wario's GBA debut is a sublime platformer, but on the easy side. 90%

WARIO WARE INC.
From: **Nintendo** Link-up: **Y**
More mini-games than you'd ever want – and then some more! 90%

WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE?
From: **Zoo** Link-up: **Y**
Worth a punt for knowledge-o-holics, but most will tire of the formula. 67%

WINTER X GAMES SNOWBOARDING 2
From: **Konami** Link-up: **Y**
Ropy animation and fiddly controls render this a disappointment. 44%

WOLFENSTEIN 3D
From: **Bam!** Link-up: **Y**
Virtually identical to the ageing PC duffer – it just don't cut it no more. 52%

WORMS WORLD PARTY
From: **Atari** Link-up: **Y**
Little worms. In armies. With guns. A true gaming classic. 83%

WWE THE ROAD TO WRESTLEMANIA X8
From: **THQ** Link-up: **Y**
You like wrestling? You like GBA? What are you waiting for? 78%

WWF ROAD TO WRESTLEMANIA
From: **THQ** Link-up: **Y**
Stylistically, RTW is impressive, but it plays like a damp squib. 64%

XXX
From: **Activision** Link-up: **Y**
Movie license that's nice to look at, but you'll complete it in a weekend. 64%

YU-GI-OH: THE ETERNAL DUELIST SOUL
From: **Konami** Link-up: **Y**
Fanboy collectable card game made game. Niche, to say the least. 60%

YOSHI'S ISLAND: SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 3
From: **Nintendo** Link-up: **Y**
When there's a gaming museum, Yoshi's will take centre stage. 95%

ZAPPER
From: **Atari** Link-up: **Y**
Like recent Frogger games, only you're a grasshopper. Not fun. 30%

ZELDA: A LINK TO THE PAST
From: **Nintendo** Link-up: **Y**
Half-new, half-SNES conversion, this adventure yarn remains a classic. 92%

ZONE OF ENDERS THE FIST OF MARS
From: **Konami** Link-up: **Y**
Nothing like the PS2 game but reasonable enough. 62%

GBAS OF THE MONTH

Inside the crazy world of customised SPs



Most people would be happy to own one of the all-new Flame Red and Arctic Blue SPs, but not Art Ed, Alvin. He's so *Medal Of Honor* crazy that he's camouflaged his SP. But it's not just crayon-wielder Weetman. There are limited edition SPs being released everywhere. Like the New Zealand-only 'All Blacks' model pictured above. According to the big N, it's an attempt to 'create a synergy between Nintendo and the All Blacks.' Right. Still, it got us thinking. Have you customised your GBA? We'd like to see. Send your weirdest GBA designs to 'GBA Of The Month' at the usual address. You might win a big prize. But don't get your hopes up.

Disney on GAME BOY ADVANCE

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© Disney/Pixar. Based on the "Winnie the Pooh" works by A.A. Milne and E.H. Shepard.

→ WIN FAME, FORTUNE AND GBA STUFF

CRASH



WIN!

Bandicoot Bounty To Be Won!

Sticking a character called Crash on a go-kart sounds like trouble. Like one of those carpenters called Iam A Hammer that you read about in the local papers, you got the impression that Crash could not but succeed in making his barking new racer an essential purchase. Fortunately, as diligent readers of the review on page 36 will already know, we haven't been disappointed. Of the three games released on the GBA so far, *Crash Nitro Kart* is clearly out on its own.

Now ADVANCE magazine have teamed up with Vivendi Universal to offer you, the GBA public, a chance of copping off with some super Crash prizes.



COMPETITION

& CARRY!





HERE'S WHAT'S ON OFFER:

Winners

Our two lucky winners will both take home a radio-controlled Crash karts. These limited edition not-available-to-scrubbers machines are capable of hitting high speeds. We shoved one in front of an old bloke from the Antiques Roadshow and he offered us £250 for it, the cheapskate.

The first two correct entries will also get their very own copies of *Crash Nitro Kart*.

Runners Up

Fifty runners up will get exclusive Crash T-shirts

The Challenge

To get your hands on this superb collection of prizes, your task is simple. Just mark your answers to the quiz on the form below right and answer our tie-breaker. Don't want to cut up your mag? Well, a photocopy of the form will do us just fine, you sensitive things.
P.S. If you're stuck for answers why not take a peek through our history of Crash feature on page 12?

The Crash Quiz

1. Who developed *Crash* originally?
a) Naughty Dog
b) There's A Good Dog
c) Lassie

2. What was the name of the first *Crash* game released on the GBA?
a) *Crash Bandicoot XL*
b) *Crash Bandicoot XS*
c) *Crash Bandicoot Windows XP*

3. How many million games has *Crash* sold worldwide?
a) 26 million
b) 28 million
c) 30 million

4. What is the name of Crash Bandicoot's *Mario Party*-style PS1 game?
a) *Crash Bash*
b) *Crash Bang*
c) *Crash Bin Laden*

Tie-break: ADVANCE MAGAZINE only comes out four times a year because...

RULES

1. Employees of Future Publishing, Vivendi, related companies their friends and families cannot enter.

2. The closing date of the competition is Friday 19 December 2003

3. There is no cash alternative. Prizes may differ from those shown. Advance reserve the right to supply prizes of similar value.

4. The editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into.

THE COUPON

Know the answers? Circle which you think are correct and send the form off to Crash & Carry, ADVANCE Magazine, Future Publishing, 30, Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2DL

1.	2	3	4
a) ☐	a) ☐	a) ☐	a) ☐
b) ☐	b) ☐	b) ☐	b) ☐
c) ☐	c) ☐	c) ☐	c) ☐

Name _____
Age _____
Address _____
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Tie-breaker _____
Email _____
Fave Advance Game _____
_____

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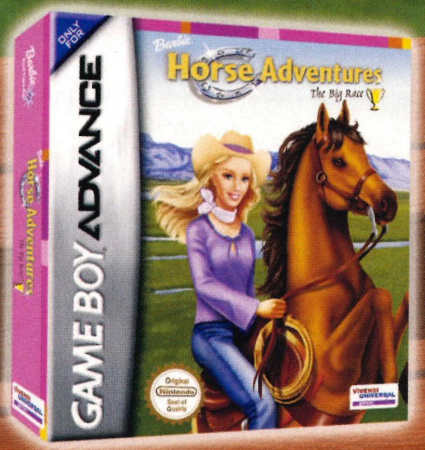
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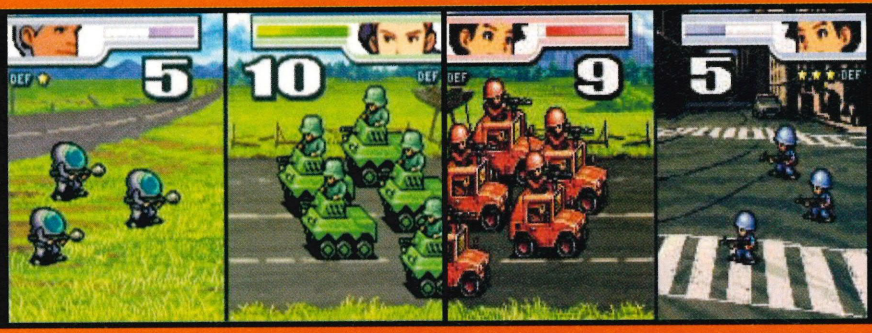
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ADVANCE WARS 2

THE SOLUTION!

Games don't come any bigger, better or brainier that *Advance Wars 2*. That's why we've put together this ten-page dossier of crucial intel. Starting over the page, we've a fully-mapped guide to seeing off the Black Hole army. It's the definitive battle-by-battle, blow-by-blow, shot-by-shot guide to fighting a successful campaign. Whether you're a virtual Monty who's tanks need that extra push to take them to S-Rank, a middle-ranking general who's choked on Green Earth or a some kind of hopeless handheld Custer who wants to be taken through the game by the hand we've something for you. And then something more. Don't go to war without it.



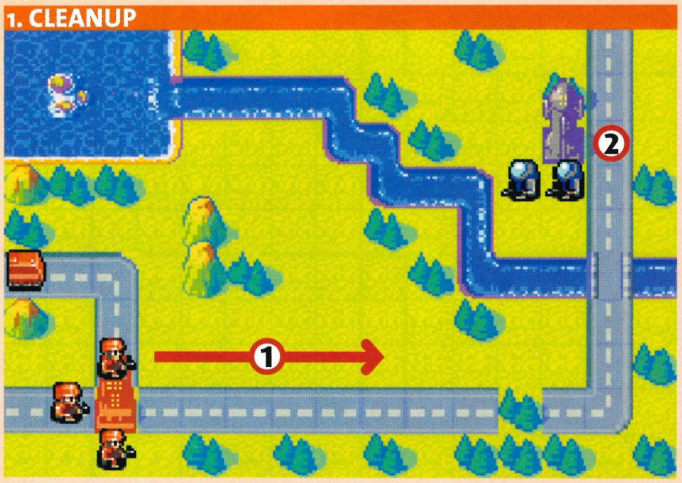
REVEALED! ALL OF THIS INSIDE YOUR 10-PAGE GUIDE TO BEATING DOWN BLACK HOLE!

- STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO VICTORY
- HINTS AND TIPS ON STRATEGY
- GET THE NEOTANKS FIRST
- EVERY BATTLE MAPPED

ORANGE STAR

The Orange Star campaign acts as a training mode, teaching you all the basics as you go along. Veterans of *Advance Wars 1* can skip the annoying dialogue by pressing Start.

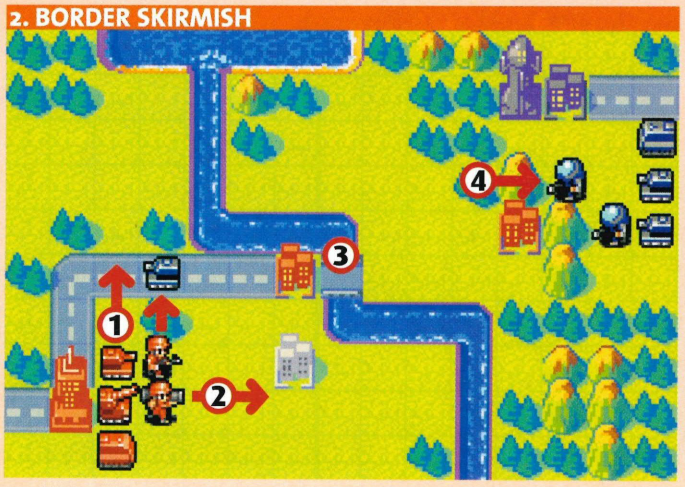
1. CLEANUP



3. ORANGE DAWN



2. BORDER SKIRMISH



4A. FLAK ATTACK



MISSION STRUCTURE



NEO TANK PLANS (NT)

You access the secret missions with the Neo-tank plans by discovering a map when you capture cities in the preceding mission. Tackle them as soon as you possibly can. Neo-tanks rock, so you want to have fun with them as early as possible, right? Head to 'Test Of TIme' straight away.

1. CLEANUP

TARGET: S-Rank **LEVEL:** ★
CO: Andy vs: Flak

1. Move all your units eastwards, using the APC to carry one of your units, but make sure that you stay out of the enemies' attack range. Take advantage of the forests for additional cover Concentrate on taking out one of the enemy at a time, and the battle will be won easily.

2. Don't be tempted to use the APC to nip past the enemy and capture the enemy HQ – it will affect your Power rating and you won't get a perfect score.

2. BORDER SKIRMISH

TARGET: S-Rank **LEVEL:** ★
CO: Sami vs: Flak

1. Use your Mech and Tank to destroy the nearby enemy Tank, again using the forests. Capture the neutral city with your Infantry. Move your Artillery eastwards and position your APC so it's within range of your Mech.

2. Drop your Mech onto the allied city to recover HP and move your Artillery into position so it can attack anything that approaches the bridge.

3. The bridge acts as a choke point – you'll be able to take out the Tanks with a combination of Artillery, your own Tank and Mech units.

4. Now it's just a case of mopping up the stragglers. Concentrate on the Infantry first, then the APC. Job done.

3. ORANGE DAWN

TARGET: S-Rank **LEVEL:** *
CO: Max vs: Flak

1. Take the enemy B-copter out with your two B-copters. Now that you have air superiority, load your Infantry into the T-copter and send it northeast in order to quickly capture the city on the island.

2. Move the rest of your units over the bridge to secure the island. Position your Artillery to take potshots at anything that attempts to cross the upper bridge.

3. Continue using your B-copters to attack the Md-tanks. You'll be able to advance the rest of your army across westwards to finish the job. And don't worry if you don't get much use from your Artillery – it's not Max's strong point, after all.

4A. FLAK ATTACK

TARGET: S-Rank **LEVEL:** **
CO: Max vs: Flak

1. Use an Anti-Air unit to attack the enemy B-copter and form a protective wall with the rest so that your Missile can't be bombed, and move your B-copter behind this protective wall. Clever use of these air defensive units should obliterate the enemy air force with minimal casualties on your side. Priority is to take out the Bombers first, then Fighters: B-copters are the least of your worries.

2. Send your Infantry north and capture the neutral city with your Mech. You'll discover a map allowing you to access the Test of Time mission. Keep your Rockets behind the Mech.

3. When the enemy Tank approaches, take it out with your Rockets and Mech. There's no real reason to use your T-copter in this mission.

4B. LASH OUT

TARGET: S-Rank **LEVEL:** **
CO: Sami vs: Lash

1. So many new units, but as long as you follow Nell's instructions, you'll keep your chopper and fleets safe from harm. Load your T-copter into the Cruiser, and use it to attack the Sub. Use your Battleship to attack the Rockets, and keep your Sub out of the enemy Cruiser's range.

2. Ferry your Tanks across with your Lander and use them to attack the Anti-Airs. Continue to use the Lander to take a couple of Mechs across to the beach below the HQ to capture it.

3. Don't worry overly about the factory to the north – Lash will reach it before you do. Position your indirect units behind your APC and remaining Mech, and pummel anything that comes out of Lash's factory from across the water.

4C. ANDY'S TIME

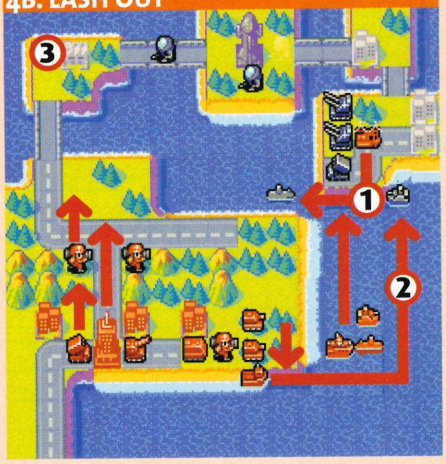
TARGET: S-Rank **LEVEL:** **
CO: Andy vs: Flak

1. Load the T-copter with an Infantry unit and head for the factory at the north-west, next to the giant cannon, but make sure you keep out of the cannon's range.

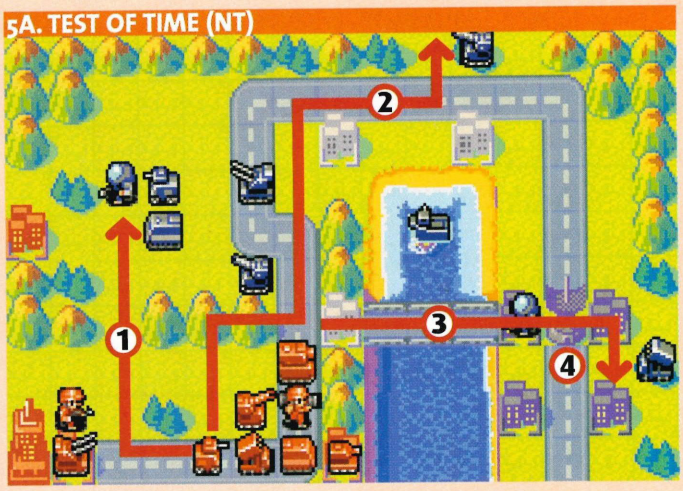
2. Building an APC and a couple of Infantries to capture buildings will soon have the funds rolling in. Flak only builds Infantries, so you there's no need to build anything heavier than Recons or Anti-Airs. Send them north to keep his forces at bay.

3. Once you've captured the northern factory, build a couple of Artillery to take the cannon and win the battle.

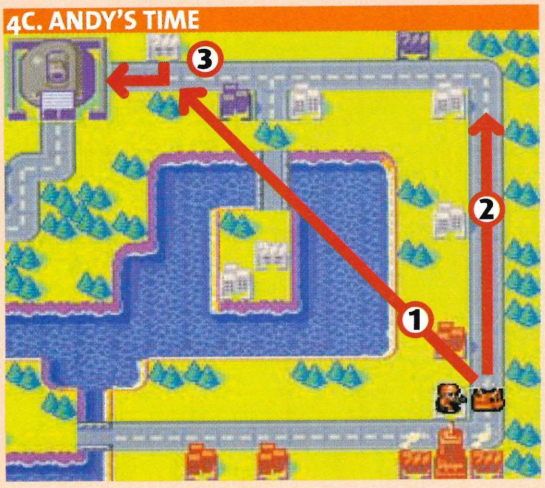
4B. LASH OUT



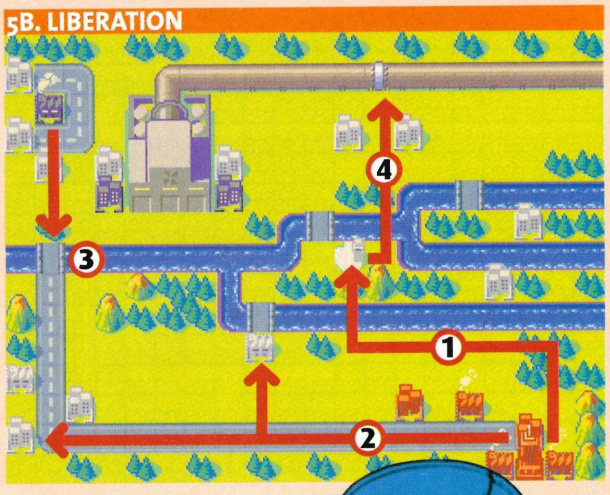
5A. TEST OF TIME (NT)



4C. ANDY'S TIME



5B. LIBERATION



5A. TEST OF TIME (NT)

TARGET: S-Rank **LEVEL:** ***
CO: Andy vs: Flak **FOG OF WAR**

1. Most of Flak's units are located to the north of your starting position, so you should concentrate most of your firepower in that direction. For the sake of thoroughness (and the best possible score), don't miss the Lander hidden in the reef.

2. There's an enemy Artillery hidden in the forest to the North of the map. A good technique to flush it out is to send a Recon between two forests, thereby allowing you to peek into both at once. You can't attack a unit that you've just revealed, so you'll need to make sure you've got back-up.

3. Send a Tank and APC loaded with an Infantry across the bridge. There's a further indirect unit hidden in the forests to the east, this time Rockets, so flush it our using the Tank first — if you enter the top-most forest, then move your Tank down in a straight line, you'll stop when you bump into it.

4. Capture the lab or wipe out all resistance to reveal the Neo-tank plans. Now you can use this mother of direct combat units in further missions, though only in the Orange Star campaign. Drat.

5B. LIBERATION

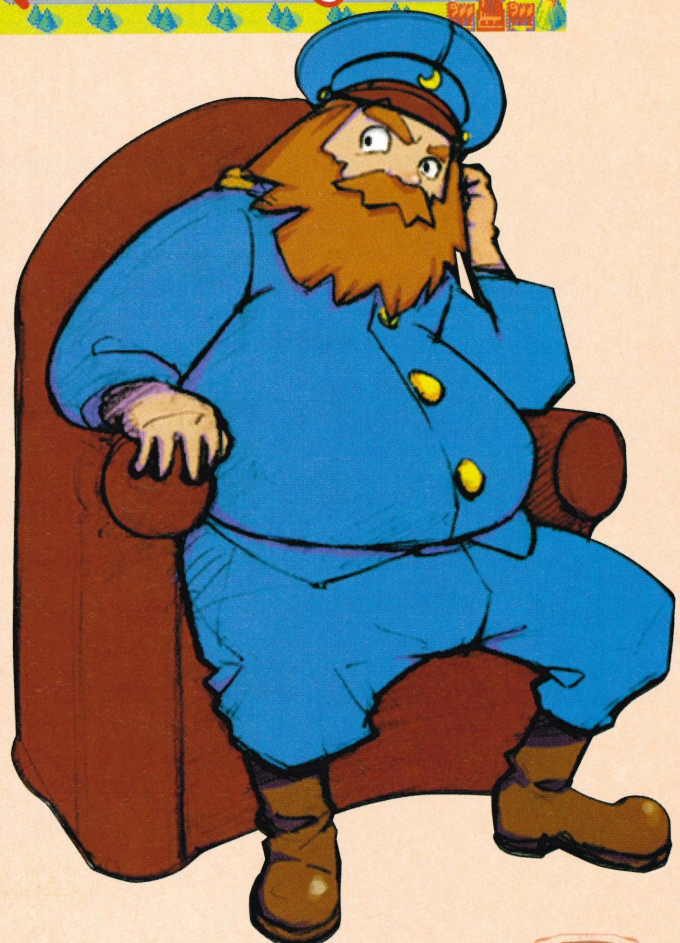
TARGET: S-Rank **LEVEL:** ****
CO: Max (recommended), Sami or Andy vs: Flak

1. Your number one priority is to capture the airport in the middle of the map and build a Bomber before the enemy has a chance to counteract. Build an APC in your western-most factory and an Infantry in one just below it. Drop him off in the river just south of the airport to capture it as quickly as possible.

2. Further APCs with Infantry should be dispatched to capture the other factories at the south of the map. Once done, send them to capture cities – Bombers ain't cheap!

3. Flak has a group of Infantries, Mechs and a Recon in the north-west, but don't head for the bridge to block them – you'll lose units unnecessarily. Wait for them to come to you, then attack. A mixture of Tanks, Recons and Anti-Airs is the cheapest, most effective way.

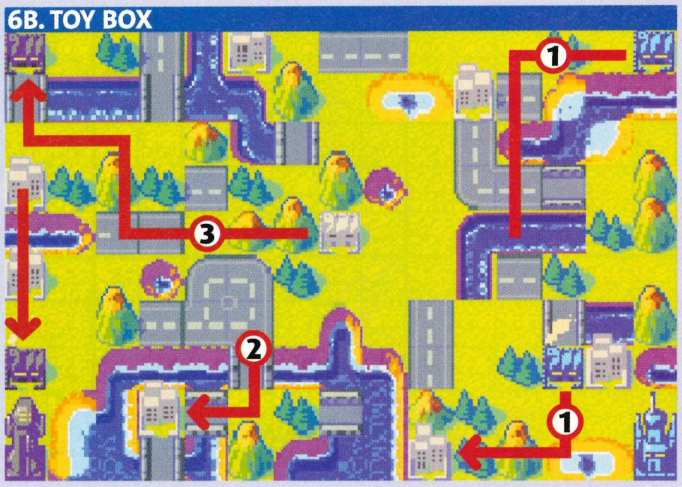
4. Block the middle bridge with something expendable, like a Recon to prevent Anti-Airs getting close to the airport. When you've got enough cash, build a Bomber, head for the seam, and send the Black Hole army packing. You may want to save the game just before doing this to see if it's worth wiping out more of Flak's units and building some more of your own – thereby increasing your Power and Technique scores.

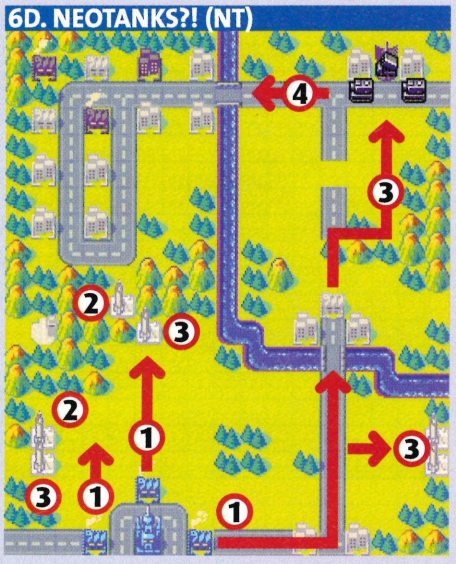


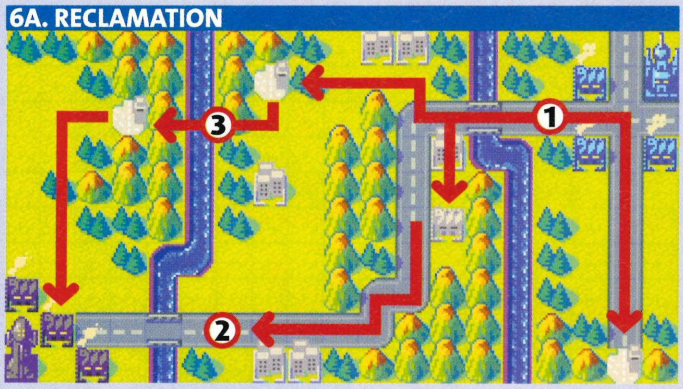
BLUE MOON

Tackle Blue Moon first – it's easier than Yellow Comet. Even so, you don't have Nell to hold your hand any more, and there's a new bunch of COs to play with.

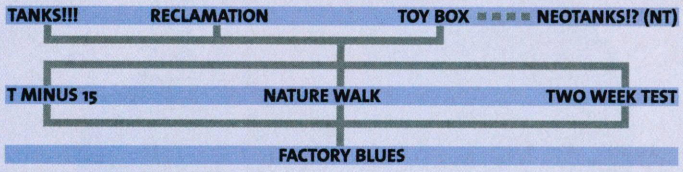








MISSION STRUCTURE



6A. RECLAMATION

TARGET: S-Rank, 16 days **LEVEL:** **
CO: Colin vs: Lash

1. Kick things off by building Infantries and APC and concentrate on capturing the factory and airports first, the cities second.

2. Build a bunch of Recons to hold back Lash's Infantries in the south, then supplement these with Tanks, Artillery and Rockets once you've captured enough cities to get the funds rolling in. Steady now.

3. Build B-copters and then Bombers at the airport, followed by a T-copter with an Infantry to capture the enemy airport and then HQ – or you can simply wipe out all enemy units in about the same time frame.

6B. TOY BOX

TARGET: S-Rank, 16 days **LEVEL:** ***
CO: Olaf vs: Lash

1. For the first couple of days build Infantries on both bases, making sure that you capture the factory in the centre, and all cities in your 'half' of the map.

2. You'll need to capture this city on the 'island' to obtain the map to the 'Neotanks!?' Mission.

3. Continue with a mix of Infantry, Recons, Anti-Airs and mostly Tanks. Sending a force towards the northernmost factory to stop production will make the final push against the factory and HQ in the south much easier.

6C. TANKS!!!

TARGET: S-Rank, 8 days **LEVEL:** **
CO: Grit vs: Adder

1. Adder has ten Md-tanks, at his disposal, but it's the Mechs you need to worry out as they can cross the mountains and cause a great deal of damage on your Rockets – so fire on these in preference to the tanks. Move the centremost rocket westwards, and keep the rest on cities to repair damage and keep their ammo topped up.

2. Send one Infantry towards the silos, but keep the other on hand to take care of any Mechs that make it over the mountains.

3. Send your Recons to locate the enemy, but keep them hidden in forests or you won't have them for very long. It's a good idea to move these after you've fired all available Rockets – otherwise your targets may disappear from view. You should be able to obliterate everything well before your HQ's in danger.

6D. NEOTANKS!? (NT)

TARGET: S-Rank, 15 days **LEVEL:** ***
CO: Colin (recommended), Grit or Olaf vs: Lash

1. Build Infantries the first round, sending the westernmost one to capture the airport, the northern towards the silos up north, and the eastern one east to capture the cities there, then man the silos. Next send an APC loaded with Infantry to go forth and capture the base across the bridge.

2. Save the silos for later in the mission if you can, but don't let them fall into enemy hands. Ideally, you want to fire them in quick succession at the units clustered around the enemy lab to coincide with your final push, but you can use a couple to protect the airport or stop the enemy advance down the western flank, if necessary.

3. Once the factory has been captured and the funds start rolling in, build as many Md-tanks as you can muster, along with a rocket or two, and assemble them just out of harms way. When you've got a decent force, load up an Infantry with your APC, unleash silos at the laboratory, and advance to destroy the now battered enemy force.

4. Once you've cleared the surrounding units, all you need to do is hold the bridge while your Infantry captures the lab.

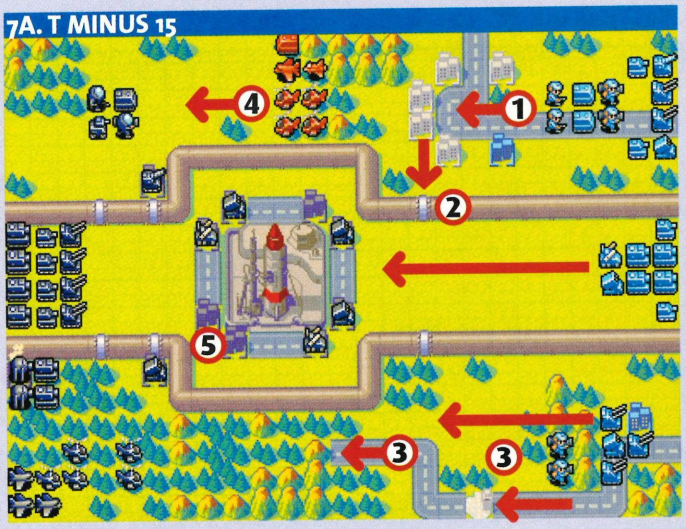
7A. T MINUS 15

TARGET: S-Rank, 14 days **LEVEL:** ***
CO: Olaf and Andy vs: Flak

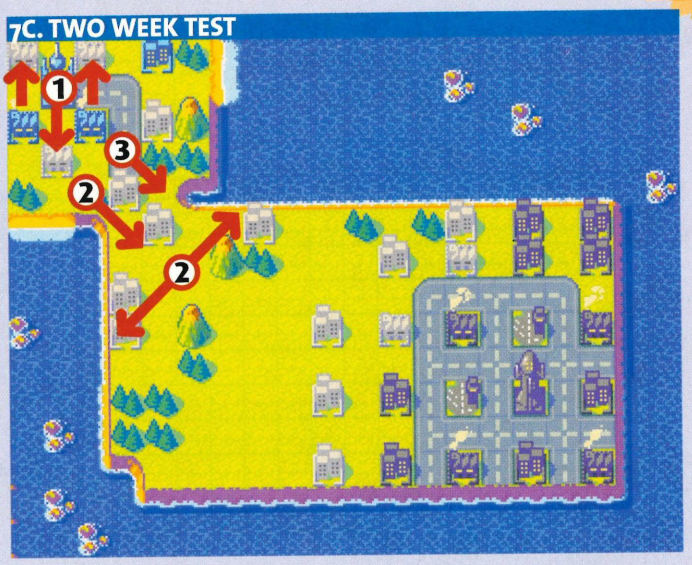
1. Olaf only has two Infantries and four Mechs and no factory to produce more, so you'll need to protect them at all costs. Don't use them for combat, only to capture cities. Start by taking control of the cities immediately to the west of the northern group. Use your indirect units to attack the pipe seam, but make sure you leave space for Andy's Bomber to finish the job in one shot.

2. Clever checking of the enemy's attack range will allow you to attack the Missiles and Rockets with minimum casualties to Olaf's central force. Once you've broken through the seam above, combine the northern and central armies using the Tanks to make the brunt of the assault. Your Artillery and Rockets will take out aggressors indirectly, keep your soldiers at the back to capture the eight cities. Now the money will really roll in.

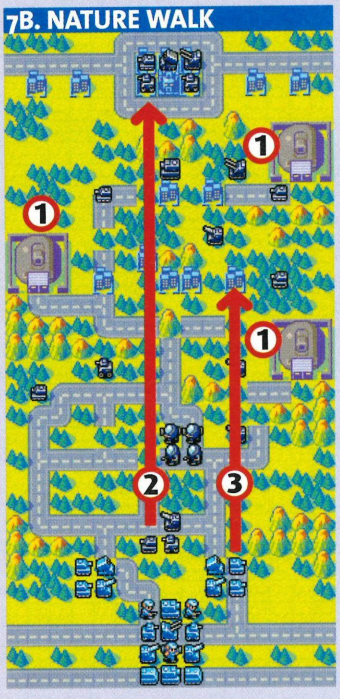
7A. T MINUS 15



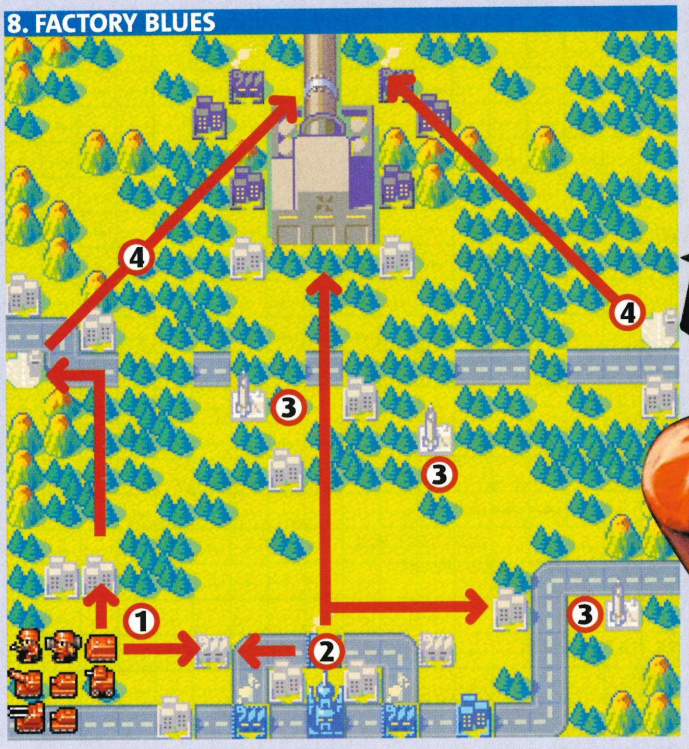
7C. TWO WEEK TEST



7B. NATURE WALK



8. FACTORY BLUES





3. In the south take on the air force with your Anti-Air units, Bombers first, then B-copters. Once you've captured the airport build Bombers – you can halt the advancing army simply by blocking its route between the pipe and the mountains with a single aircraft.

4. Andy only has airborne units, and so can't capture cities, but keep the APC nearby to refuel your aircraft. Destroy everything to the west of you with your B-copters (but ignore the Artillery for now as it'll put you in range of the Missiles). Send the Bomber east to help take out the pipe seam and then use all units to assist Olaf. Breaking the seam to the west will only unleash the Anti-Airs against you.

5. Remember that it isn't enough to destroy all enemy units, you have to capture all eight cities and so you need to make steady, but safe, progress to prevent the launch within your 15-day deadline.

7B. NATURE WALK

TARGET: S-Rank, 9 days **LEVEL:** ****
CO: Grit vs: Lash

1. The most important thing to remember is to always keep all units hidden in the forests – if they're spotted, then not only are they in danger from nearby enemy units, but from the huge cannons, too, which hit your health for a massive 5 points.

2. All you have to do to win is send a single unit to reach your HQ. The fastest is the Recon, and it should be reasonably safe if you send it along the west of the map, and you should be able to reach your target in around eight or nine days.

3. Send the rest of your units slowly but steadily towards the cluster of cities, taking out any enemy units you meet on the way. The enemy Mechs and Infantries will start capturing cities, so you'll be able to use your indirect units to take them out as they expose themselves. Although it's not necessary to do this to win, it is if you want a good rating.

7C. TWO WEEK TEST

TARGET: A-Rank, 14 days **LEVEL:** ****
CO: Colin vs: Lash

1. You're hopelessly outnumbered here, but all you need to do is survive for 14 days. First build Infantry and capture all the nearby bases and cities, once done, you can sacrifice them to the onslaught to safeguard more expensive units.

2. Next build a line of Tanks to across the bottleneck, and reinforce with Artillery and Rockets to fire on units that attack your Tanks. You will have to keep building Tanks to keep your front line strong.

3. Keep an eye on Lash's airports and build Missiles and Anti-Air when you see a B-copter appear. More copters and Bombers will appear, so you'll need a few sacrificial Anti-Airs to take them down before they damage your front line. The main thing is not to be tempted to advance past the bottleneck; it's suicidal!

8. FACTORY BLUES

TARGET: S-Rank, 16 days **LEVEL:** ****
CO: Colin (recommended), Grit or Olaf Max (recommended), Sami or Andy vs: Lash

1. Let Max capture the two cities to the north of his units, and the closest factory, then advance your units and take the western airport. It's a good trade.

2. Capture everything else with Colin as early as possible. Start mass-producing Anti-Airs and Tanks to claim the centre ground and head towards the factory gates – your aim it to block its doors and cut off the constant supply of new units.

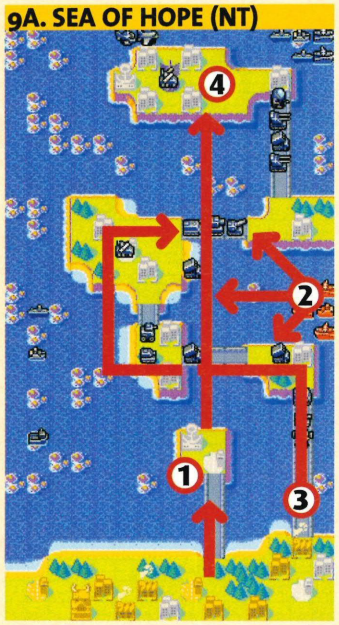
3. Don't fire the silos too early, but wait until Lash has built some expensive units so you can do real damage to the war effort.

4. Once Max has the west airport, build B-copters and attack from the west. Colin takes the east airport and builds a Bomber. Attack the factories and pipe from both sides and victory will soon be yours. Hurrah!

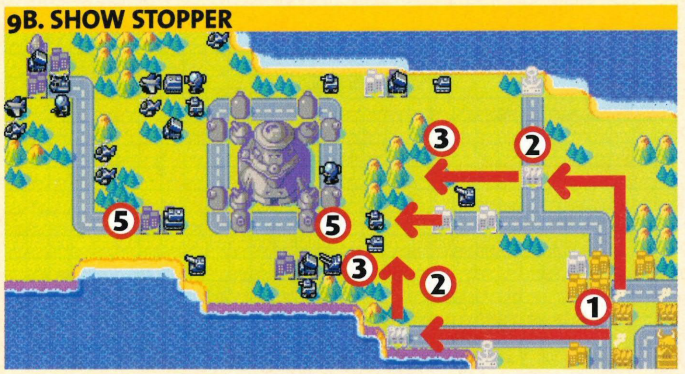
YELLOW COMET

If you get stuck on one of the Blue Moon missions, you can always try your luck on the Yellow Comet maps. They're tougher, though. So you're better off getting experience...

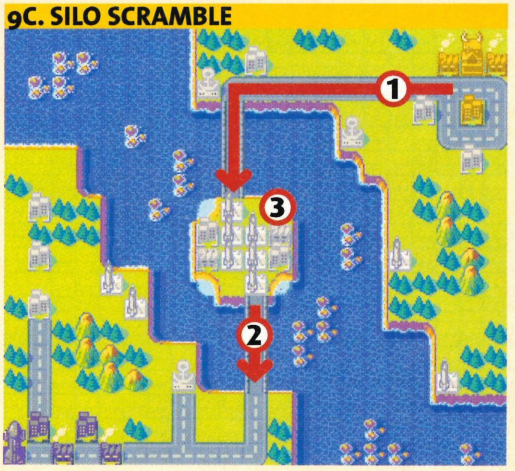
9A. SEA OF HOPE (NT)



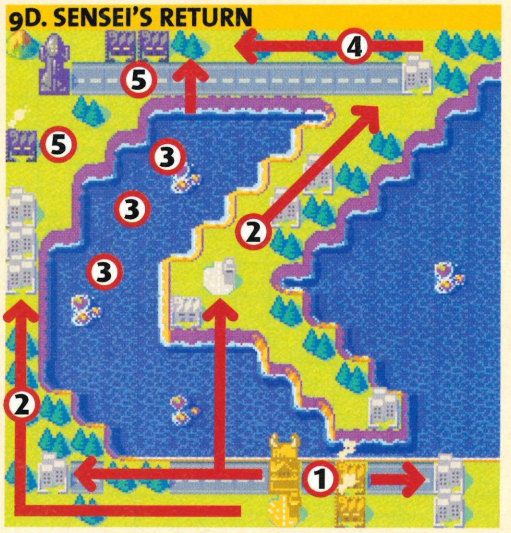
9B. SHOW STOPPER



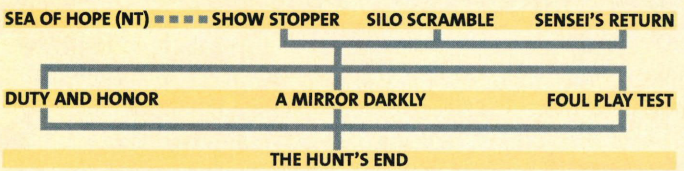
9C. SILO SCRAMBLE



9D. SENSEI'S RETURN



MISSION STRUCTURE



9A. SEA OF HOPE (NT)

TARGET: S-Rank **LEVEL:** *****
CO: Kanbei (recommended), Sensei or Sonja vs: Adder

1. First off, use T-copters to capture the airport and port on the island just to the north of the Yellow Comet starting point. You've got a lot of ground to cover, so build Tanks and Anti-Airs to forge the way ahead. Adder doesn't have any factories, so he can't replace any ground units you destroy.

2. Sami needs to take out as many Rockets as she can with the Battleships, and once there are no more Rockets within range, aim for the other units. After that, place your surviving units south of the final bridge to leading to the lab to help protect the Yellow Comet advance.

3. There will still be Rockets to contend with and, later on, Battleships, so build some Rockets of your own to counter. It's not worth getting involved in a lengthy sea battle – ignore the Subs and head for the lab as quickly as you can.

4. As you close in, load a T-copter with an Infantry around day 13 and build Bombers to take out the Battleships, Cruisers and the remaining units protecting the lab. Neo-tanks are yours!

9B. SHOW STOPPER

TARGET: S-Rank, 24 days **LEVEL:** ****
CO: Sonja vs: Adder **FOG OF WAR**

1. This is tough, initially, so be prepared to defend at full stretch early on. Your first priority is to capture the two nearby factories with Infantries and APCs, then move on to the other nearby cities.

2. Build an Anti-Air at first to defend against Adder's choppers and Bombers – these can inflict serious damage, so make sure you've always got a couple of Anti-Airs thereafter and keep their health topped up.

3. Build Tanks to take care of the Rockets and Recons, and make good use of the camouflage afforded by the forests.

4. Once you've weathered Adder's early assault – and have some spare cash rolling in – switch production to Md-tanks, and begin to take out the cannons.

5. The map to the Sea of Hope mission, and thus the plans for the Neo-tanks – is located in the most south-westerly city, so make sure you claim this before wiping out the final cannon.

9C. SILO SCRAMBLE

TARGET: S-Rank, 18 days **LEVEL:** **
CO: Kanbei vs: Flak

1. Your number one priority is to secure the central island, so build an APC and Infantry and start capturing the factories and cities there. Build further Infantries to capture the cities and ports in your area of the map, and then send a man down in anticipation of destroying the silos.

2. Don't waste money building anything at the ports, just capture them for the funds they bring in. Instead, build a column of units to defend the bridge leading to the island – a couple of Tanks, backed up with Artillery and Rockets will do the trick.

3. Don't go mental firing off silos when you first reach the island – wait until you've got Flak on the back foot and then let them rain down his more powerful units to speed up the end game.

9D. SENSEI'S RETURN

TARGET: S-Rank, 24 days **LEVEL:** ***
CO: Sensei vs: Adder **FOG OF WAR**

1. Build a T-copter and Infantry to capture the airport and factory to the north, and dispatch other Infantry to capture the cities to the east and west of you.

2. Build mainly B-copters, but also a couple of Tanks to take care of any Anti-Airs that might spoil your fun, and send one up through the peninsula, the other west and then north. Build an Artillery to follow behind your Tank, too.

3. You can easily reveal the fog of way by keeping B-copters a square away from the coastline so they can't be attacked by Anti-Airs.

4. Beware of Missiles hidden along the northern forests – a good strategy is to fly one B-copter along the line of forests, then the other to attack it once it's been discovered.

5. Carry the push on down both flanks, and block his factories when you have the opportunity. You'll probably knock out all his units before capturing the HQ.

10A. DUTY AND HONOR

TARGET: S-Rank, 14 days **LEVEL:** ****
CO: Kanbei vs: Adder

1. The lasers here fire every second day, so make sure you're out of their line of sight on these days. More pressing is reaching the ten cities in the northeast of the map - they'll be captured by day 10 if you don't get there first.

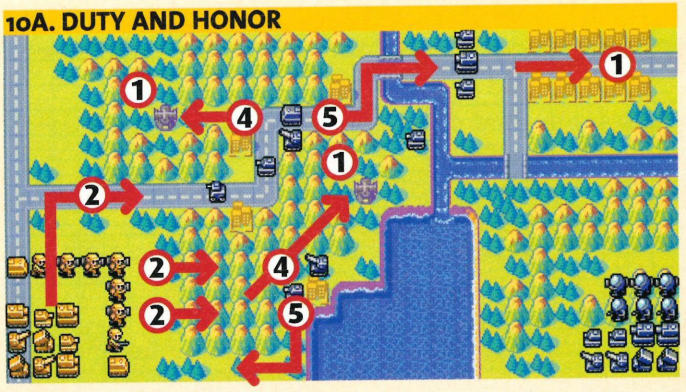
2. Load the Infantry into APCs and send your Mechs over the mountains. As you don't have to worry about the lasers on day one, move everything as far as you can along the road.

3. The enemy Tank and Artillery will try and sneak up on you from behind – don't worry about it, but at the same time don't let them attack you either – take them out as they approach you.

4. Take out the northern laser with Artillery and Rockets the day after it fires. Likewise the southern laser can be neutralised with a mixture of Rockets and Mechs.

5. Once they're destroyed, head for those cities, Tanks first, followed by indirect units, and wipe out the enemy soldiers. You'll still have to wipe out his remaining units once the cities have been safeguarded.

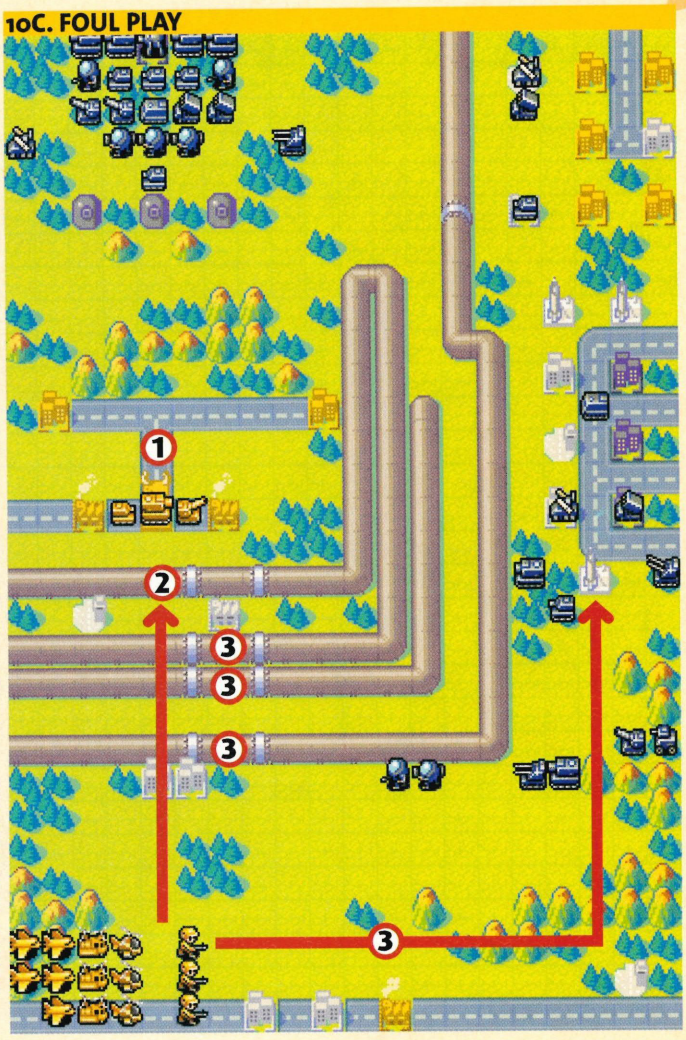
10A. DUTY AND HONOR



10B. A MIRROR DARKLY



10C. FOUL PLAY



10B. A MIRROR DARKLY

TARGET: S-Rank, 12 days **LEVEL:** ****
CO: Sonja vs: Lash

1. You've got to protect your HQ – Lash doesn't have to capture it to win, just land a unit on it, so keep your units guarding it as they are at the beginning, throughout.

2. Move Mechs into the mountains for a good view, but make sure you leave a further row of mountains between them and the Tanks for protection. Keep an eye out for the enemy Mechs, Rockets and Artillery range, though. Your Recons should track the advancing force as they move up the map.

3. Positioning your Rockets and Artillery is critical. Stick a rocket each side of the HQ so that their attack ranges cover anything that takes on the units defending HQ.
4. Move the rest of your indirect units as close to the mountains as you can, and space them evenly. Concentrate on the units spearheading the advance, not necessarily the strongest units, and aim to damage as many individual units rather than taking one out completely – Lash tends to merge damaged units, thereby slowing her advance and giving you fewer targets to aim for.

10C. FOUL PLAY TEST

TARGET: S-Rank, 10 days **LEVEL:** ****
CO: Sensei vs: Adder

1. Your forces have been cut in two by a several pipes, and unfortunately it's just your weaker force to the North that stands in the way of Adder and your base. Your priority, then, is to blow the seams pronto to reunite your forces.

2. Use your Artillery and Md-tank up north to blow the seam immediately below your base – at least that way you can capture the airport, then factory, for reinforcements. Then brace yourself for the onslaught. Protect your HQ at all costs and await reinforcements from the south. Spend all your money on Bombers, B-copters, and even an Md-tank or two, to bolster your northern force.

3. Your southern force is easily capable of mopping up Adder's weaker army to the south. Use your T-copters and Infantry to capture cities, while your Bombers and B-copters can obliterate everything in your path. By the time you reach the silos, they'll come in very useful. Keep a couple of Bombers back to blow the pipes from the southern side, though.

11. THE HUNT'S END

TARGET: S-Rank **LEVEL:** *****
CO: Kanbei (recommended), Sonja or Sensei, Max (recommended), Sami or Andy vs: Adder

1. Kanbei: Load an APC with an Infantry and capture the most easterly factory first, then send another APC and Infantry to capture the middle factory, plus, of course, grab all the cities within range.

2. Build Anti-Airs, Tanks, Md-tanks, Artillery, Rockets and Neo-tanks if you've got them and attack Adder from both sides of the mountain range at the southeast to slowly but steadily push him back. Use lots of indirect units here.

3. You can despatch a Lander with an Infantry to take the airport if you like, but don't waste money on a Battleship. You can protect the port by keeping a Lander moored there.

4. Max: Build a couple of Infantries and capture the cities and port, then build a Lander and send it north to capture the airport and cities. Send another couple of Infantries to capture all the buildings on the island to the east, too.

5. Build a Bomber to take care of the pesky Battleship that heads your way, then build Artillery, Tanks and, later, Md-tanks, and ferry them across to the north island to advance towards the pipe.

6. Use Bombers to take out the cannons from the side where they're unprotected, and finally the pipe seam once you're ground force has Adder's Missiles and Anti-Airs under control.

11. THE HUNT'S END

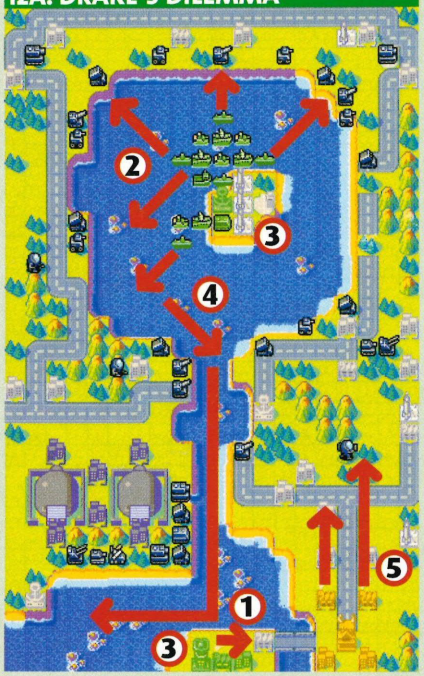




GREEN EARTH

Another continent, another bunch of COs to get to grips with. As you might expect, the Green Earth missions can be exceedingly tough.

12A. DRAKE'S DILEMMA



12B. SEA FORTRESS



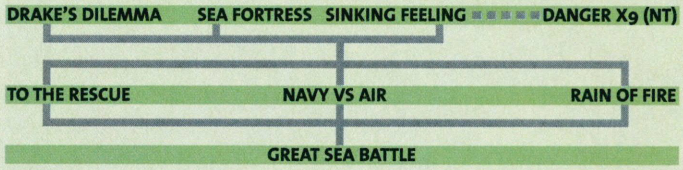
12C.SINKING FEELING



12D. DANGER X9 (NT)



MISSION STRUCTURE



12A. DRAKE'S DILEMMA

TARGET: B, 21 days **LEVEL:** *****
COS: Drake and Kanbei vs: Hawke **FOG OF WAR**

1. Drake has a lot of varied sea units up north and a factory way down south – so setting off those silos or capturing the airport isn't an option, unfortunately. You'll have to make do with capturing the nearby factory with an Infantry then leave the rest for Kanbei.

2. Send your Subs towards nearby woods, then order them to dive, to reveal what's hiding in them. Position your Battleships on reefs, and take out any units that reveal themselves, concentrating on Missiles and Artillery first. Sweep your submerged Subs around the coast and continue to take out everything you see.

3. Build only Battleships as Subs and Cruisers are only any good for locating enemy units, or build a Tank or two to help Kanbei out.

4. Don't worry too much about destroying everything around you, and once the immediate threats are neutralised head south, hiding in reefs as you go. You'll be able to take out the eastern cannon from the reefs nearby, and force of numbers should see you finish off the western cannon in short order.

5. Kanbei should try to hold back Hawke as best he can. After capturing surrounding structures and firing the silo, build mostly Tanks. Around day 15 or so, Hawke will build Neo-tanks, so be prepared for them!

12B. SEA FORTRESS

TARGET: A **LEVEL:** *****
CO: Eagle vs: Hawke

1. You have about twice as many units as Hawke, but this still isn't easy as it looks you've got air units and you're essentially fighting Anti-Air units.

2. The trick here is concentrating your full force on at one side at a time – south first, for example. Check the range on everything, before making a move.

3. After you have finished off the enemy Fighters and B-copters, use your remaining Fighters as bait. Be very careful with your Bombers they are the most important unit here. When going for the first Missile, make sure you attack from the east to remain out of range of all other units.

12C. SINKING FEELING

TARGET: S-Rank, 15 days **LEVEL:** ******
CO: Jess vs: Lash

Here you have 17 days to destroy the Black Hole Army's nine Battleships that are in for repairs. Time is really tight, so advance all the time – don't wait for the enemy to come to you. In the first round use your anti air as a bait for the Tank and move the rest forward, out of the Tank's attack range so that you can eliminate it next turn. Use this technique to draw the enemy out as you advance.

2. Capture the port and build a Lander and head for the island to the west. Capture the southernmost city to gain access to the 'Danger X9' mission where you'll get the chance to capture the intel needed to build a Neo-tank.

3. Go for the southeast base first, and once you've secured it, go for the middle-east. Lash likes to park Rockets behind the factory, so use two Md-tanks to the immediate south and west to take out whatever comes out of the factory safely out of the attack range, then send something on top of the factory to kill the Rocket. We're gunning for you, son.

4. Take out the cannons with Rockets just out of their firing range, then just keep on sending in indirect units to surround the dock area to pummel the Battleships. They can't fire back at you, the only thing they'll do is to unite together when damaged.

5. You won't need any more tanks now, but plenty of Anti-Air, Artillery and Rockets. The air force will be your number one enemy, and Bombers and B-copters will be a real pain. You can use your remaining Tanks to build a 'wall' at the north of the dock to prevent Bombers reaching your indirect units, and to fire on weakened Battleships.

12D. DANGER X9 (NT)

TARGET: S-Rank, 10 days **LEVEL:** *****
CO: Eagle (or Jess and Drake) vs: Hawke

1. You have ten days to capture the enemy lab. You can either try and fly a T-copter to capture it, but the simpler strategy is simply to build Bombers and wipe everything else out before time runs out.Build an Anti-Air at your western factory and an Infantry at your middle factory – the one enclosed by the pipes – to capture the airport. From here on, build only Bombers and let them out by bombing the north-east seam. Then proceed to bomb the bejesus out of everything you can.

2. Move the rest of your units north, and your battle ship between the two reefs and the Cruiser in the north-west reef. There's an Anti-Air to watch out for, but that's the only thing that can hurt your aircraft. Hawke also has two Rockets and Artillery that will easily take out your ground units, so be careful if you want a decent score.

13A. TO THE RESCUE

Target: S-Rank, 6 days Level: *****
CO: Eagle and Sami vs: Adder

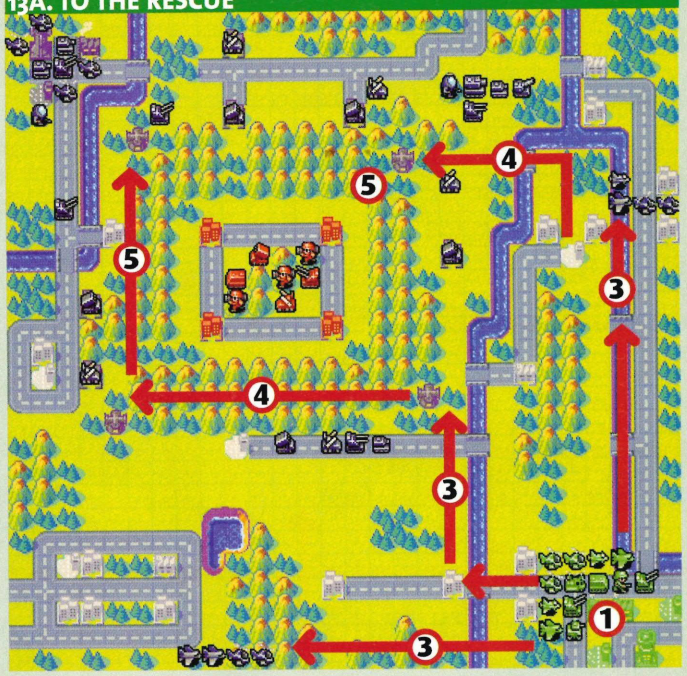
This looks really hard – it is. But use your Bombers and Lightning Strike wisely and it can all be over within a few days – follow these step-by-step instructions and you'll have won before the enemy has time to react.

1. Move the two Bombers and one of the Fighters north along with an Anti-Air. Move the rest west, but don't go more than one square past the river because of the laser cannons – they're laid out in such a way that there are two beams next to each other in every direction. Sneaky.

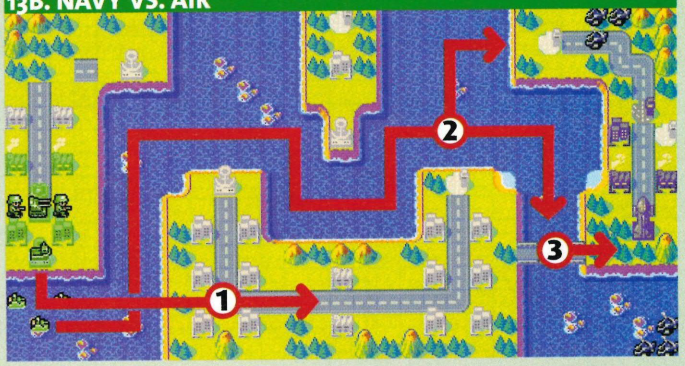
2. As Sami, make sure you're out of the fire range of the surrounding Rockets. Cities have good protection.

3. The next day, take out the south-east laser with one of your Bombers, move the other one north. Damage the Fighter with your Anti-Air

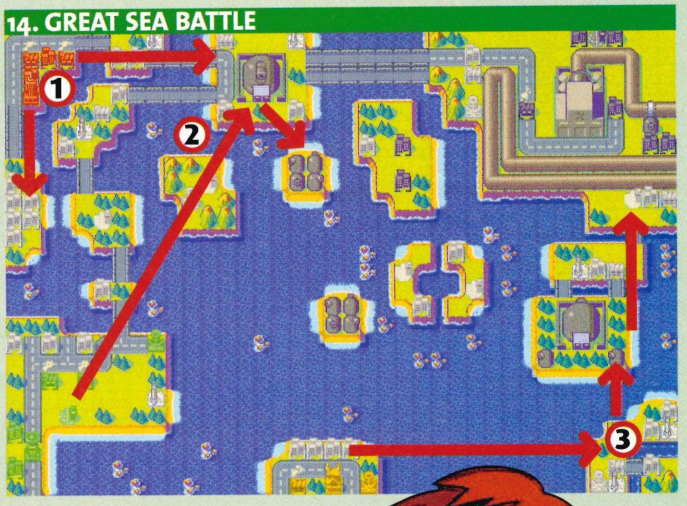
13A. TO THE RESCUE



13B. NAVY VS. AIR



14. GREAT SEA BATTLE



13C. RAIN OF FIRE



and destroy the Bomber with your Fighter. Take out one Bomber to the south with your Fighter, take out a B-copter with two B-copters and the last B-copter with the Anti-Air. Move your third B-copter north, out of range of any Missiles.

4. You should have the lightning strike the third day so that you can take out the north-east and south-west lasers. Move your B-copter further north, keeping out of range of any Missiles. Use remaining units to attack any enemy units that you see fit. Move Fighters towards the middle to help out Sami.

5. Go for the north-west laser canon with your hopefully undamaged south-west Bomber. Use the other Bomber or B-copter to finish of the north-east laser canon if you didn't finish it last round. You can bet this battle wasn't supposed to be this short...!

13B. NAVY VS. AIR

TARGET: S-Rank, 20 days **LEVEL:** *****
CO: Drake vs: Hawke

1. Here you need a lot of Infantries – and to get them working to capture everything they can get their hands on on the large southern island. There are plenty of cities and so funds won't be a problem.

2. Hawke has six B-copters which you can take out with your Cruisers, but be careful that you don't get hit first. Make sure you're out of range whenever Hawke builds a B-copter, then go in to attack it – he never seems to build two in a row.

3. Where the bridge at the south-east can hold you up for a long time. Build some Artillery and Rockets to get past the bottleneck then continue and destroy all his units. At the end he'll try to make as many Mechs as he can to stall you, but by this stage he's on the back foot and you should be able to take this level.

13C. RAIN OF FIRE

TARGET: S-Rank, 20 days **LEVEL:** ****
CO: Jess vs: Hawke

1. This is a pretty straightforward once you've learnt the volcano pattern. The pattern alternates every day, so watch where the lava lands and keep away from those locations.

2. Build APCs and Infantries and go for the first factory you come to in the south, then the second factory you come to in the north just past the second bridge. After this you'll most likely see the enemy going south to fight against your eastern factory. In the north there will only be a couple of units, so they won't be a problem.

3. Use most of your funds in the south-east part, only building a Tank once in a while to the north-west. Build mostly Tanks, and Md-tanks when you get enough funds. Have some Infantry on hand too to capture cities as you advance through the map.

14. GREAT SEA BATTLE

TARGET: S-Rank, 25 days **LEVEL:** *****
CO: Eagle (recommended)
or Drake or Jess
Max or Sami (recommended)
or Andy Kanbei (recommended)
or Sonja or Sensei vs: Hawke

1. There are two good ways to take out the pipe seam. You can attack it with Eagle's Bombers, or destroy it with Kanbei's Rockets from the south. Since it's really hard just getting over the bridge to Hawke's factory, the recommended option is with Kanbei. Orange Star should capture the properties to the south together with Eagle. As Sami, build mostly Mechs together with a few Tanks, Md-tanks and Anti-Airs. As Max build mostly Tanks, Md-tanks, Neotanks and Anti-Airs. Try to advance past the bridge. Destroy as much as possible.

2. Eagle's job is to destroy the huge cannon with a Bomber, then to destroy the two small north cannons with Bombers. Build mostly Bombers, but have some Fighters ready because Hawke builds three or four of his own to counter your Bombers.

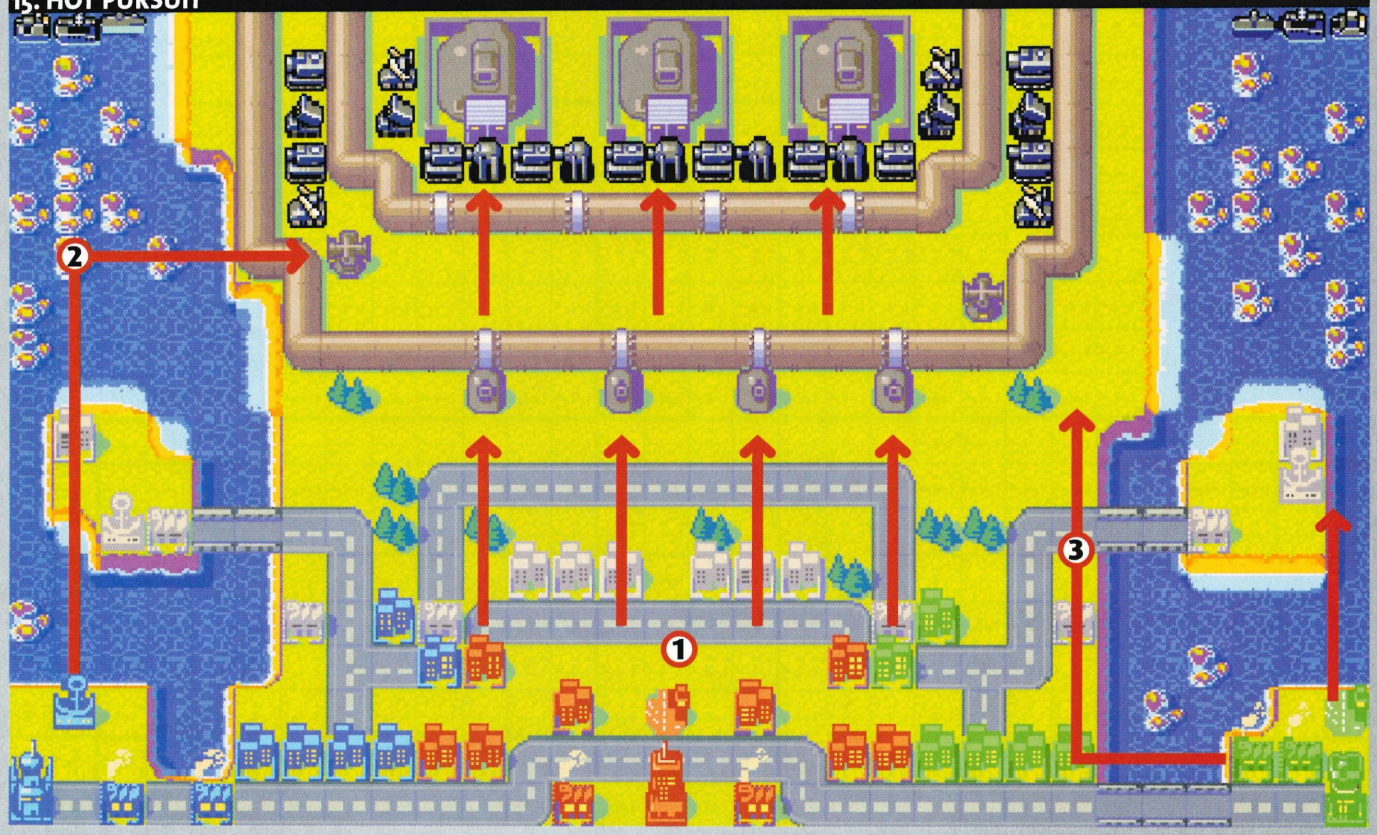
3. Send Kanbei to capture the cities and factories in the eastern island. Then move north and take out the eastern small cannon then the larger one. Take the northern factory and build two Rockets. Fire first at the small cannon south of the pipe seam, then move the second one forward to destroy the pipe seam. Now take the fight to Black Hole!



BLACK HOLE

Now's the time to take on Black Hole in their own turf. Just two missions, but they're tougher than everything you've faced so far...

15. HOT PURSUIT



MISSION STRUCTURE

HOT PURSUIT

FINAL FRONT

HOT PURSUIT

TARGET: S-Rank, 32 days **LEVEL:** ******
CO: (Right) Andy (recommended) or Sami or Andy
(Middle) Grit (recommended) or Colin or Olaf
(Left) Drake (recommended) or Jess or Eagle
Yellow Comet COs also available vs: Sturm

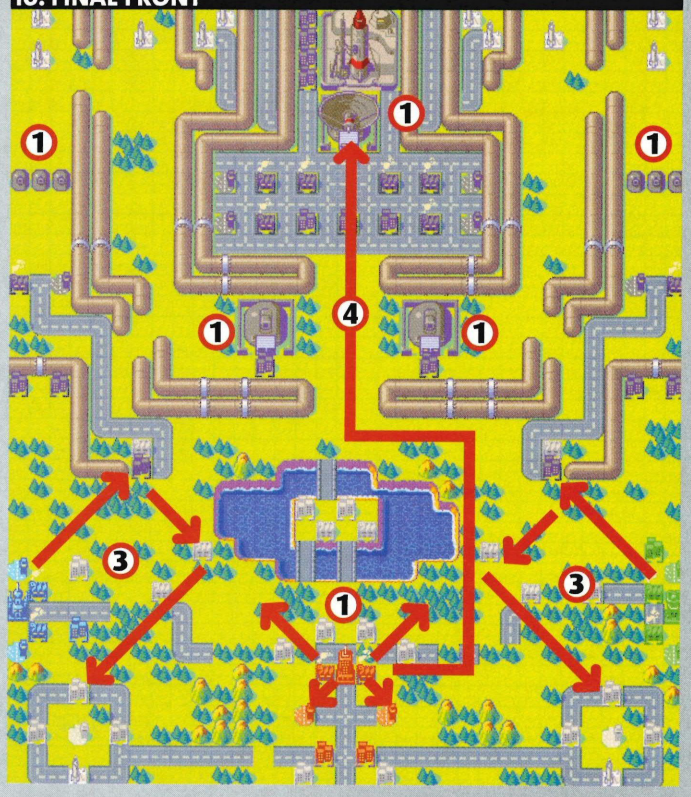
1. With Grit in the centre, build a couple of Infantry units to capture the nearby cities and factories then only Rockets, moving them up and taking out the cannons at the front.

2. Don't build anything for Drake first go, then build a Sub on the second and sacrifice it by moving it into the range of the cannons. This should build your CO Power and give you Tsunami, which halves the enemy's fuel and strands Submarines and Tanks. Do this again later – the cannons never completely kill your units, but it increases your CO Power – so the enemy runs out of fuel just outside the outer ring of piping! Eventually build B-ships, run them up the left and take out the lasers and Rockets. But don't take the lasers out until Grit's ready with about 6-8 Rockets by the pipe... Don't blow it now!

3. Andy's job is to take out the right-hand side navy and right-hand laser – and act as a decoy! Once you've built a Battleship to go up the right and take out the laser, build Neo-tanks and Bombers. Whenever Sturm looks like he's about to use his meteor strike, bunch them up so he hits them, and not Grit's amassed Rockets. Use his Hyper Repair CO Power or cities to repair all damaged units, and wait for the next hit.

4. To finish the job, blow the seams to let the enemy out, and destroy them using Drake's Battleships off the west coast, or Grit's Rockets right up to the outer pipe, using Bombers and Neo-tanks as decoys for the Black Cannons. Once you have each opening jammed with 2 Rockets, use Grit's Super Snipe CO Power to take out all the big cannons in one turn!

16. FINAL FRONT



FINAL FRONT

TARGET: A-Rank, 19 days **LEVEL:** *******
CO: (Right:)Max (recommended) or Sami or Andy
(Middle) Colin (recommended) Grit or Olaf
(Left) Eagle (recommended) Sonja or Jess
Yellow Comet COs also available Vs: Sturm

1. You've got 30 days before the large rocket fires, the deadly deathray which damages all enemy units in its range, plus lasers, mini-cannons and black cannons to contend with. The deathray fires every seven days, so the trick is to keep out of range, then bomb the building at its base after it fires on day 14.

2. Colin (or whoever's in the middle) should build four Infantry to capture the nearby bases. After this, build only Bombers, plus an APC to refuel them. You want at least two Bombers, but the more the betterer.

3. Max and Eagle need to build a bunch of T-copters and Infantry for the first few days to capture everything they can get their hands on, starting with the factories close to the pipes. From there on, build a mix of units to secure their areas – Anti-Air, tanks and indirects – and defend against Sturm.

4. After day 14, send the Bombers, accompanied by the APC for refuelling – along Max's flank, and use Max's units for protection. Make sure you keep the Bombers out of the range of the large cannons, but don't attack them. Go straight for the base of the death ray. Even with Colin's weakened power, two hits is enough to kill it.

BASICS, TACTICS & STRATEGIES

The best way to become proficient in *Advance Wars* is to play it – lots! But until you develop your own tactics, here are some good rules of thumb...

CHECK ATTACK RANGES
Always check the attack ranges of your own units – and those of your enemies – before moving a single unit, and refer to it *constantly* as you make your moves. Press B while the cursor is over a unit and the area it can potentially attack is highlighted in red.

CHOKE POINTS
Choke points are areas of the map where the terrain on either side is impassible by many units, thereby restricting units to a single-file column – such as bridges or between mountain ranges. A few Artillery and Rockets placed around a choke point can deal an awful lot of damage. Clever, eh?

BLOCKING
Blocking is simply parking a unit on top of an enemy factory, airport or port, thereby preventing him building anything. Very effective, buy it's wise to follow up with an infantry as soon as possible so you can start to actually begin to capture the structure. You can also block choke points – put a unit that the enemy can't attack, a T-copter when they have no Anti-Air to hand, for example – and you can hold them up until they build. Then move into range a unit capable of countering.

MERGING UNITS
There are pluses and minuses to merging units. On the plus side, a single unit with 10HP will do more damage than two of the same units with just 5HP. And any spare hit points are converted back into cash, which can be very handy if you just need a little more to afford a particular unit. The minus is that you forgo an attack as you merge, and that you're reducing the number of units the enemy needs to target — especially bad if they can still take out the stronger unit with one hit.

SAVING
Save the game before taking on a course of action you're undecided about. If your plan fails miserably, you can always quit and restart at the point before your foolish error. It's also useful to save just before you win – if you get a low technique or power score, you can replay the end game building more units or destroying more of the enemy's in order to increase your rating.

STEALING
Capture enemy buildings whenever they don't have anything around to stop you. At the very least, you'll get more cash for a few days, while they get less cash until they get it back.

NEO-TANKS
Neo-tanks are the new unit in *Advance Wars 2*, and can only be built once you've located the secret level and captured the plans for each army's campaign. They can devastate Md-tanks in combat and will cause 30 percent more damage against a Md-tank than if it were up against another Md-tank. They're more likely to cause one-hit-kills than Md-tanks, and they have a greater movement range – six squares, rather than the Md-tank's five.

ONE-HIT-KILL
Killing a unit outright in one attack is desirable, not only because it means that it can't counter-attack next turn, but because it'll free your other units up to focus on other targets. This is especially important if you need to attack a column of enemy armour that's surrounded by impassible scenery such as mountains. If you don't get one-hit-kills then your advance stops dead. So learn how the units fare against each other, and always try for likely one-hit kills at the beginning of your attack.

EXPENDABLE UNITS
Sometimes it's worth sacrificing a unit to protect something more valuable. Surrounding your Rockets with Anti-Airs means that the enemy will have to sacrifice their bomber to take you out. Infantry can provide a cheap, effective barrier around more expensive units, and it's worth losing an APC to slow the enemy advance if it buys you a little time to reinforce with units of your own. And sacrifice anything you've got if it'll protect an infantry as it captures the enemy HQ!

TERRAIN TACTICS
Always make use of the protective cover of terrain. A unit will be much tougher to kill if it's parked in a city than on the open road. And Mechs in mountains can be a real thorn in the opposition's side.

ACHIEVE S-RANK
In Campaign mode, you're rated out of 100 points for Speed, Power and Technique. To achieve S-rank, you need a combined score of 280 or higher. Power is the measure of how many enemy units you destroy, so in the last days of a battle, prior to capturing the enemy HQ/ blowing up a pipe seam/ destroying the black cannon, etc, destroy as many enemy units as possible. Technique measures the ratio of units built to units lost, so again in the last days of battle spend all remaining cash building units – even if you don't use them.

MECH FLOOD
We'd call it a Mech Rush, but they move so slowly... the strategy is to mass produce Mechs and have them constantly advance towards the enemy, using their great strength of numbers to overwhelm them. Mechs are cheap to produce and can destroy vehicles many times their cost. On the downside, they're the slowest unit there is, so can't really launch surprise attacks. And you'll suffer heavy loses, resulting in a terrible technique rating.

TANK RUSH
Similar to the Mech Flood, but mass-produce Tanks and use superiority of numbers to overrun more expensive units. Again, you'll lose a lot

ANTI-PERSONNEL WARFARE
If the enemy is mainly producing Infantry or Mechs, send Recons against them. They're cheap, move quickly, and can cause a lot of damage. And as the CPU always aims to have a minimum of five mechs, it's a great way to prevent it from building heavier firepower.

LAND GRAB
Early in the game, load up APCs and T-Copters and head for structures far away at first, the idea is to capture more than half the map so that you have a financial advantage on the enemy. At the very least, the enemy will expend valuable resources removing you from buildings that are rightfully theirs geographically speaking...

HIDING
In Fog of War maps, make good use of forests and reefs to conceal units – especially indirect units like Artillery, Missiles and Battleships – you can't be spotted unless something comes right next to you. Recons should always be hidden in forests – sneak one into the enemy base for invaluable intel about their movements, but never, ever. be tempted to break cover, even to prevent a nearby infantry capturing a building – you'll quickly lose your hidden pair of eyes.

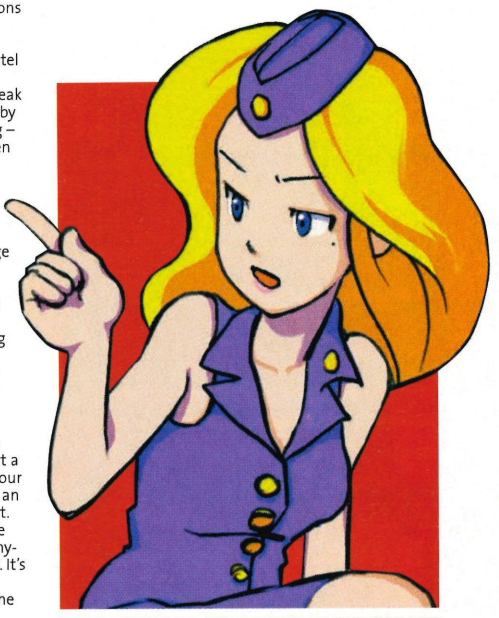
FLUSHING
The way to uncover hiding units is to send something with a large movement range – like a Tank or 'Copter – through as many forests or reefs as possible. It'll stop as soon as it 'bumps' into a hidden enemy unit, revealing its position ready for you to attack with your other units standing by.

FLYING COLUMN
The best formation to break through bottlenecks it to put a tank or two at the head of your column, and back it up with an Artillery followed by a Rocket. The Tank is your shield, while the units behind pummel anything that attacks your Tank. It's useful to have a spare Tank following that can replace the leader if it's lost.

ALTOGETHER NOW
Be wary about sending speedy units whizzing ahead without protection – you're likely to lose it very quickly. Slow and sure is often better, moving a mixed group only as fast as its slowest units. Good stuff.

WAR OF ATTRITION
This basically boils down to spending less money than your opponent, only deploying the units you need to defend, then using the cash you've saved up to produce a devastating assault later in the game. Once you've saved around 100,000G, splash it out on four or so Neo-tanks, back with Artillery, and storm the enemy positions.

ANYTHING ELSE?
Finally, *always* press L before your turn ends to see if you've forgotten about any units. It's easily done!



KNOW YOUR CO's

Every CO has their strengths and weaknesses, and clever use of CO Powers can turn a battle. You'll need to adapt your strategies to suit.

CO POWER STARS
Your meter is charged as you take damage, and less so as you deal damage. It takes 9000G worth of damage to fill a star. For example an Md-tank is worth 16000G. If it's attacked and looses five hit points, the power bar will charge by 8000G worth – equivalent to half the value of the tank. The CO that inflicted the damage gets their meter charges by half the value of the attack – in this case 4000G.

So the worse an army is faring, the more quickly their CO Power charges, to give them a better chance of getting back into the game!

Each time a CO Power (or Super CO Power) is used, the cost per star is increased by 2000G. However, the day after a CO uses their power, the CO Power bar will not fill up, regardless of how much damage you cause. So take advantage and give their units a sound kicking!

It's usually better to save up for the more Powerful Super CO Power, unless you're in dire need. But each CO has a quirk or two.

DAMAGE CHART

Use this chart to see the likely outcome of an attack against a particular unit. The figure given is damage dealt by a unit with full HP against a unit with no terrain bonus, and these will be modified by any attack or defense bonus the COs might have. For a one-hit-kill on a unit with full HP, you need a figure of 100% damage or greater. If the defending unit has, say, 7HP, then you require 70% or more to finish it off.

Defend	Attack															
	Inf	Mech	Recon	Tank	Md	Neo	Art	Rock	AA	Miss	BCopt	Bomb	Fight	Cruis	Sub	BShip
Inf	55%	65%	70%	75%	105%	125%	90%	95%	105%		75%	110%				95%
Mech	45%	55%	65%	70%	95%	115%	85%	90%	105%		75%	110%				90%
Recon	12%	85%	35%	85%	105%	125%	80%	90%	60%		55%	105%				90%
Tank	5%	55%	6%	55%	85%	105%	70%	80%	25%		55%	105%				80%
Md	1%	15%	1%	15%	55%	75%	45%	55%	10%		25%	95%				55%
Neo	1%	15%	1%	15%	45%	55%	40%	50%	5%		20%	90%				50%
Art	12%	70%	45%	70%	105%	115%	75%	80%	50%		65%	105%				80%
Rock	25%	85%	55%	85%	105%	125%	80%	85%	55%		65%	105%				85%
AA	5%	65%	4%	65%	105%	115%	75%	85%	45%		25%	95%				85%
Miss	25%	85%	28%	85%	105%	125%	80%	90%	55%		65%	105%				90%
APC	14%	75%	45%	75%	105%	125%	70%	80%	50%		60%	105%				80%
TCopt	30%	35%	35%	40%	45%	55%			120%	120%	95%		100%	115%		
BCopt	7%	9%	10%	10%	12%	22%			120%	120%	65%		100%	115%		
Fight									65%	100%			55%	55%		
Bomb									75%	100%			100%	65%		
Land				10%	35%	40%	55%	60%			25%	95%			95%	95%
Cruis				5%	45%	50%	65%	85%			55%	85%			25%	95%
BShip				1%	10%	15%	40%	55%			25%	75%			55%	50%
Sub				1%	10%	15%	60%	85%			25%	95%		90%	55%	95%
Pipe*	1%	15%	1%	15%	55%	75%	45%	55%	10%		25%	95%				55%

*Pipe refers to all terrain objects, including black cannons, minicannons and lasers. They all take the exact same amount of damage

They're Back!







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WIN!

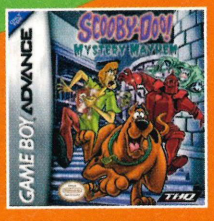


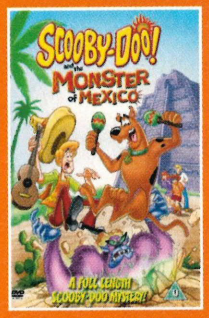
→ WIN SCOOBY STUFF

MAGICAL MYSTERY PRIZES

ADVANCE unmask yet more incredible goodies...

You can't keep a good dog down. Or a slightly wacky cartoon one, for that matter. *Scooby Doo! Cyber Chase* has been one of the GBA's surprise hits – indeed, at the time of writing, it was still floating around in the top 10 – and this month the follow up, *Scooby Doo! Mystery Mayhem*, hits the shelves. Giving you control of both Scooby and Shaggy provides a neat twist on the ever-reliable platform scenario, and with plenty of ghostly giggles on offer, *Mystery Mayhem* looks all set to surpass the original's success.





WHAT'S IN SCOOBS SNACK?

Winners

One lucky winner will take home a GBA SP, a copy of *Scooby Doo! Mystery Mayhem* and a *Scooby Doo* DVD

Runners-Up

The next four names drawn out of a hat will win *Scooby Doo* DVDs



Runners-Up to the Runners-Up

A further 10 lucky ADVANCE readers will win Banjo-Kazooie Bops (a small inflatable punch bag). Why? Because, er, *Banjo-Kazooie* is an excellent game and also published by THQ

HOW TO SCOOP THE SWAG

Fancy getting your hands on the hound's swag? We bet you do. To win big, all you have to do is help us. Scooby's gone astray you see, and there's a tiny image of him hidden away somewhere inside this magazine. All you have to do is tell us what page he's hiding on.

Remember: Prize Scooby is hidden away, not decorating this page, the contents page or the review pages (52-53).

When you've found the not-very daring dog stick the answer on a postcard, or the back of a stuck down envelope, and send it to:

'Scooby Dooby Doo, Here Are You'
ADVANCE Magazine
Future Publishing
30, Monmouth Street
Bath
BA1 2BW

RULES

1. Employees of Future Publishing, THQ, related companies their friends and families cannot enter.

2. The closing date of the competition is Friday 19 December 2003

3. There is no cash alternative. Prizes may differ from those shown. Advance reserve the right to supply prizes of similar value.

4. The editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into.

FEEDBACK



OFF CUTS

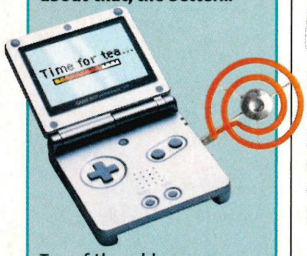
I went to the US recently and came across Morris Stegosaurus. He came fourth in the Poetry Slam Championships 2001. Here is an extract from *Squin(t): A Love Poem*:

'Oh Rhoda, let me be your Crash Bandicoot-er, your Winnie the Pooh-ntang, your Peek-a-boo Pikachu Pokemon, Rhoda! Oh Rhoda, let me be your Milarepa, your Siddhartha, your Shivananda (It goes on and on and on – Ed.)'

How about more poetry in your magazine?
GEORGE TTOOULI, HEAVENTREE PRESS

WINNERS!

Last issue we asked you to design the ultimate GBA Peripheral. We expected you to surprise us, and in a way, you did. To be frank, we've had more tasteful spam in our Hotmail accounts. But the less said about that, the better...



Top of the add-on pops was
Clive Culverhouse
of Market Rasen, Lincs. Clive suggested that the GBA needed a heating element to keep his tea warm – a fine suggestion, and perfect for the only games machine in the universe that has games the size of a tea bag.

RUNNERS UP!
The other princes of peripheral design
Haroon Rasheed
From Rochdale
James Garwin
from Stockport
Martin Golding
From Bexley
Morgan Griffith
From Rhyl
Philip Ryan
Dundrum, Co. Tipperary

'Lett-ers entertain you', you write. Like you're some kind of northern podgy dancer who used to be in Take That.

'GBA GRAND FROMAGE'

STAR LETTER

Yo! I've got a few things to say, really. Ermm? Firstly, your mag is DA BEST. It is DA BIG CHEESE! But, there's a kinda problem. You know at da back where the massiv' 294 games r rated? Well, it would be great if you guys put a little more info in, like how much it is, is it a multiplayer game and whatever. Secondly, I think *The Sims* is the best PC game eva. Now its been released on PS2, why not on da GBA? And finally, is da reason you can't get demo carts for the GBA because they're too expensive?
STEPHANIE SMITH,
LOWER STONDON, BEDS

PS Can I have a SP?

Issue 6 sees the launch of our all-new review directory – an improvement, don't you think? You'll be pleased to learn that *The Sims* IS coming out on GBA – check page 66 for the review. Lastly, you're spot on about the demo carts.

PS. No, you can have the Joytech stuff.

'STEFFI GRAFF-ICS'

I think games these days are c*** on GBA. When I heard a 32bit handheld was coming out, I thought it meant the same graphics as PlayStation1. But looking at games like *Zelda* and *Mario*, it looks like it can barely top the SNES. Games are about graphics, and frankly, I don't see any on GBA now.
ANON,
LEYTON, LONDON.



Um, every game on the GBA has graphics. But we guess you mean, 'why aren't there more PS1-style pseudo-3D games on the GBA?' It's true some developers have been lazy in porting old 2D titles to the GBA, but what's important is that we get more new games like *Final Fantasy* and *Boktai*, surely?

'BATTERIES NO LONGER INCLUDED'

Just writing to say that your magazine is CLASS & am proud to say I have all 5 issues, even though I don't have a GBA. Anyway, the point of this email: have you ever wondered about having a Web site with reviews, previews and a chatroom? Keep up the good work!
LEIGH DEPASOIS,
EMAIL

PS. Roll on Fri 21st Nov 2003 – issue 6!
PPS. Why have you done another GBA/SP cheats book?
PPPS. Where have the batteries gone?
PPPPS. You should of kept the original small size!

The Web site won't happen until the mag comes out more regularly. Check us on www.gamesradar.co.uk 'till then.
PS. Do people like the non-tips book this issue?
PPS. Batteries don't seem so relevant post-SP. Anyone have other ideas?
PPPS. We preferred the smaller size too. Blame the capitalist pig dogs in charge.
PPPPS. Roll on issue 7.

'WHERE AM YOOS?'

I can't find ADVANCE in the shops anywhere. Can you tell me which shops in Wolverhampton sell it?
JAMES MORRIN,
WEST MIDS

I cannot seem to find any copies of ADVANCE in any shops around Wolverhampton *or* Wombourne.
JAMES MORRIN,
WEST MIDS

When published, ADVANCE is stocked in Wolverhampton, Wombourne, Willenhall, Walsall, West Brom and all-through the West Mids. We don't offer subscriptions, as not even we know what the publishing schedule for 2004 will be yet, sorry to everyone who has written in about this.

WRITE IN AND WIN!

JOYTECH

Got something to say? Then say it! Send us your musings and not only could your prose appear in the pages of what is, undoubtedly, the world's premier Game Boy Advance magazine, but you've got a chance of winning a stack of wondrous goodies, too.

Yes, the author of the Star Letter gets a splendid JOYTECH accessory bundle to keep their Game Boy Advance company. Not only that, but you get the choice of GBA or GBA SP accessories to match the machine you own. Here's the beef:

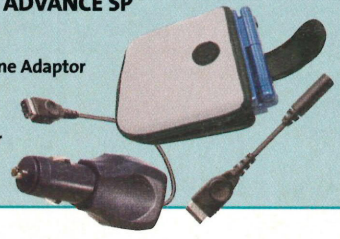
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Battery Grip
Illuminator Pro
Link Cable
Stereo Earphones
Advanced Protector Case



GAME BOY ADVANCE SP

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Stereo Earphone Adaptor
Link Cable
Carry Case
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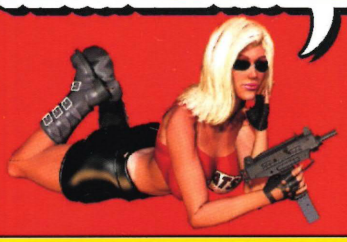


Send your thoughts to:
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Or you can use the electric post. Just make sure the header says FEEDBACK, and send it to: advance@futurenet.co.uk

Don't forget to include your name and address so we know who to send the booty to, and let us know whether you'd prefer the GBA or GBA SP prize pack.

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Amped Snowboarding
Baldur's Gate: D. Alliance 2*
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Buffy 2: Chaos Bleeds
Buffy The Vampire Slayer
Championship Manager '02
Colin McRae Rally 4
Conflict: Desert Storm 2
Counter Strike*
Die Hard: Vendetta
Enter the Matrix
Falcone: Into Maelstrom*
FIFA 2004
Freedom Fighters
Grand Theft Auto 3
Grand Theft Auto: V. City*
Halo
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin
Indiana Jones: Emp.'s Tomb
James Bond 007: Nightfire
Knights of the Old Republic
Max Payne
Medal of Honor Frontline
Medal of Honor: R. Sun*
Pirates of the Caribbean
Raw 2, WWE
Return to Castle Wolfenstein
Rollercoaster Tycoon
Splinter Cell
Star Wars: Jedi Academy*
Star Wars: Jedi Knight 2
St.Wars: Knights Old Rep.
SWAT: Global Strike Team*
The Hobbit*
The Return of the King*
The Simpsons: Hit & Run
Tiger Woods Golf 2004
Tony Hawk's U'ground*
True Crime: Streets of LA*

Plus Many More...

GAMECUBE

Ace Golf
Aggressive Inline
American Pro Trucker
Blood Omen 2
BMX XXX
Bomberman Generation
Buffy 2: Chaos Bleeds
Bulletproof Monk*
Conflict: Desert Storm 2
Die Hard: Vendetta
Enter the Matrix
Eternal Darkness
FIFA 2003
FIFA 2004
Freedom Fighters
F-Zero GX
Harry Potter & Ch.of Secrets
Judge Dredd:Dredd v Death
Leg. of Zelda: Master Quest
Leg. of Zelda: Ocarina of T.
Leg. of Zelda: Wind Waker
Lost Kingdoms
Lost Kingdoms II: Rune
Luigi's Mansion
Mario Sunshine
Medal of Honor Frontline
Medal of Honor: R. Sun*
Mega Man Network Tran.
Metroid Prime
P.N 03
Phantasy Star Online
Pikmin
Prince of Persia: S. of Time*
Rebel Strike, R. Squadron 3
Reign Of Fire
Resident Evil
Resident Evil 3: Nemesis
Resident Evil Zero
Robotech: Battlecry
Rogue Leader
Scooby Doo: Night of 100 F.
Shrek: Extra Large
Simpsons: Road Rage
Sims
Skies of Arcadia Legends
Sonic Adventure DX
Sonic Mega Collection
Soul Calibur 2
Splinter Cell
SSX 3
Star Wars: Bounty Hunter
Star Wars: Clone Wars
Star Wars: Jedi Knight 2
Star Wars: Rogue Leader
Starfox Adventures
Super Mario Sunshine
Super Monkey Ball 2
Super Smash Bros Melee
Teenage Mut. Ninja Turtles
The Hobbit*
The Return of the King*
The Simpsons: Hit & Run
The Sims
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Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4
Tony Hawk's U'ground*
True Crime: Streets of LA*
Turok, Evolution
Viewtiful Joe
Wreckless: Yakuza Mission
WWE Wrestlemania X8
WWE Wrestlemania XIX
XGRA*
XIII (Thirteen)*
X-Men 2: Wolverine's Rev.
Zelda: Ocarina of Time
Zelda: The Wind Waker

Plus Many More...

PS2

Age of Empires 2
Alone in the Dark 4
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance
Batman: Rise of Shin Tzu
BloodRayne
Buffy 2: Chaos Bleeds
Conflict: Desert Storm 2
Dark Cloud 2
Dead to Rights
Die Hard: Vendetta
Dynasty Warriors 3
Dynasty Warriors 4
Enter the Matrix
Escape from Monkey Island
FIFA 2004
Final Fantasy 10
Fire Warrior
Freedom Fighters
Getaway
Gran Turismo 3
Grand Theft Auto 3
Grand Theft Auto: V. City
Gumball 3000
Harry Potter & Ch.of Secrets
Here Comes The Pain*
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin
Indiana Jones: Emp.'s Tomb
Jak 2: Renegade
Judge Dredd:Dredd v Death
Jurassic Park: Op. Genesis
Kingdom Hearts
LMA Manager 2003
Lord of the Rings: F. of Ring
Lord of the Rings: T. Towers
Mace Griffin: Bounty Hunter
Madden NFL 2004
Manhunt*
Matrix, Enter the
Medal of Honor Frontline
Medal of Honor: R. Sun*
Metal Gear Solid 2
Midnight Club 2
Premier Manager 2002
Pro Evolution Soccer 3
Project Zero
Ratchet and Clank
Ratchet and Clank 2*
Res. Evil: Code Veronica X
Silent Hill 3
Simpsons: Hit & Run*
Sims
Smackdown 5: H.C.T.P.*
Smackdown! 4: S.Y.Mouth
SOCOM: US Navy Seals
Soul Calibur 2
Spiderman The Movie
Splinter Cell
SSX 3*
State of Emergency
Stuntman
Syphon Filter: Omega St.*
The Getaway
The Simpsons: Hit & Run
The Sims
The Thing
Tiger Woods Golf 2004
Tomb Raider: Angel of D.
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4
Tony Hawk's U'ground*
True Crime: Streets of LA*
Vice City, Grand Theft Auto
Warhammer: Fire Warrior
WWE Smackdown! 4: S.Y.M.
WWE Smackdown!: HCTP*
XIII (Thirteen)*
Yu-Gi-Oh! Duel Monsters 2
Yu-Gi-Oh! Duellists of Roses

Plus Many More...

GAMEBOY ADVANCE

A = 0 1
A Link to the Past
Advance Rally
Advance Wars
Advance Wars 2
Aggressive Inline
Alienator: Evol. Continues
An American Tale:G. Rush
Animal Snap
Army Men: Op. Annihilation
Army Men: Op. Green
Asterix: Bash Them All
Attack of the Clones
ATV Quad Power Racing

B = 0 2
Ballistic, Ecks vs Sever 2
Banjo Kazooie: Grunty's Rev.
Boktai
Bomberman Tournament
Bond 007: Nightfire
Breath of Fire
Breath of Fire 2
Broken Sword
Bruce Lee: Return of Legend
Bubble Bobble: Old & New
Butt Ugly Martians: B.K.M.

C = 0 3
Car Battler Joe
Castlevania: Aria of Sorrow
Castlevania: Harmany of D.
Castlevania: W. N. Concerto
Chimp Chase
Chu Chu Rocket
Contra Advance
Crash Bandicoot XS
Crash Bandicoot2 n-Tranced
Crazy Taxi: Catch A Ride
Crouching Tiger, H. Dragon
Cruis'n Velocity
CT Spec.Forces: Back to Hell
CT Special Forces

D = 0 4
Daredevil
Dark Arena
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 3
Desert Strike Advance
Dexter's Lab: Deesaster Str.
Digimon: Battle Spirit
Dinotopia Timestone Pirates
Disney Princess
Disney Sport Skateboarding
Disney's Lilo and Stitch
Disney's Treasure Planet
Donkey Kong Country
Doom 2
Dora: Search for the Pirates
Downforce
Dragonball Z: L. of Goku 2
Dragonball Z: Leg. of Goku
Driven
Driver 2 Advance
Dual Blades
Duke Nukem Advance

E = 0 5
E.T. The Extraterrestrial
Earthworm Jim
Earthworm Jim 2
Ecks vs Sever
Ecks vs. Sever 2: Ballistic
Eggo Mania
ESPN Final Round 2002
ESPN Int. Winter Sports '02
Evolution Continues
Extreme Ghostbusters

F = 0 6
Fairly OddParents
Fellowship of the Ring
Final Fantasy Tactics
Final Fight One
Final Fire Pro Wrestling
Final Round Golf
Finding Nemo
Fire Pro Wrestling 2
Fire Pro Wrestling A
Frogger: The Great Quest
Frogger's Adventures 2
F-Zero: Maximum Velocity

G = 0 7
Game & Watch Gallery 4
Gekido: Kintaro's Revenge
Golden Sun
Golden Sun 2
Gradius Galaxies
Gremlins
GT Advance 2
GT Advance 3: Pro Concept
GT Advance: Championship
Guilty Gear X

H = 0 8
Harry Potter & Ch.of Secrets
Harry Potter & Phil.'s Stone
He-Man: Power of Greyskull
Hey Arnold: The Movie
Hot Wheels: Velocity X

I = 0 9
Incredible Hulk
Inter. Superstar Soccer
Inter. Winter Sports 2002
Iridion 2
Iridion 3-D

J = 1 0
James Bond 007: Nightfire
Jedi Power Battles
Jet Grind Radio
Jet Set Radio
Jimmy Neutron vs Jimmy N.
Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius
Jurassic Park 3: DNA Fact
Jurassic Park 3: Park Builder
Justice Lgue: Injustice for All

K = 1 1
Kao the Kangaroo
Kim Possible
Kirby: Nightmare in Dr'land
Klonoa: Empire of Dreams
Konami Krazy Racers
Kong
Kuru Kuru Kururin

L = 1 2
Lady Sia
Land Before Time
Lara Croft: The Prophecy
Leg. of Zelda: Link to Past
Legacy of Goku
Legacy of Goku 2
Legends of Wrestling 2
Lego Bionicle: T. of Tohunga
Lilo and Stitch
Lion King
Lord of the Rings: F. of Ring
Lord of the Rings: T. Towers

M = 1 3
Major League Baseball '02
Manic Miner
Mario Advance 4
Mario Kart Super Circuit
Maya the Bee 3
Medal of Honor Undergr'nd
Mega Man Battle Network 2
Mega Man Battle Network 3
Megaman Zero
Metroid Fusion
Mortal Kombat Advance
Mortal Kombat: Tourn. Ed.

N = 1 4
Nightfire

P = 1 6
Peter Pan: Ret.to Neverland
Pinball of the Dead
Pirates of the Caribbean
Planet of the Apes
Pocky and Rocky
Pokemon Blue
Pokemon Crystal
Pokemon Gold
Pokemon Pinball: Ruby & S.
Pokemon Red
Pokemon Ruby
Pokemon Sapphire
Pokemon Silver
Pokemon Yellow
Power Rangers: Ninja Storm
Power Rangers: Wild Force
Pro Concept Racing

R = 1 8
Rainbow 6: Rogue Spear
Rampage Puzzle Attack
Rayman 3
Reign Of Fire
Revenge of Shinobi
Ripping Friends
Road Rash Jailbreak
Road to Wrestlemania
Road to Wrestlemania X8
Robot Wars: Extr.Destruction
Robotech: Macross Saga
Rock 'n' Roll Racing
Rocket Power: Dream Sch.
Rocky
Ruby & Sapphire (P. Pinball)
Ruby Pokemon
Rugrats: I Gotta Go Party

S = 1 9
Sapphire & Ruby (P. Pinball)
Sapphire Pokemon
Scooby Doo: Cyber Chase
Secret Agent Barbie
Sega Smash Pack
Sheep
Simpsons: Road Rage
Sonic Advance
Sonic Advance 2
Space Channel 5: U.C.A.
Spiderman The Movie
Splinter Cell
Spyro: Season of Ice
Star Wars: Att. of Clones
Street Fighter Alpha 3
Super Mario Advance 2
Super Mario Advance 4

T = 2 0
Teenage Mut. Ninja Turtles
Tekken Advance
The L. of Zelda: Link to Past
The Lion King
The Two Towers
Tomb Raider: Prophecy
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3
Treasure Planet

V = 2 2
V-Rally 3

W = 2 3
WWE Road to Wr'mania X8

X = 2 4
X-Men 2: Wolverine's Rev.

Y = 2 5
Yoshi's Island
YuGiOh! Et. Duelist Saga
YuGiOh!: World Wide Ed.

Z = 2 6
Z.O.E.: The Fist of Mars
Zelda: A Link to the Past
Zelda: Links Awakening D

0-9 = 2 7
007 Nightfire

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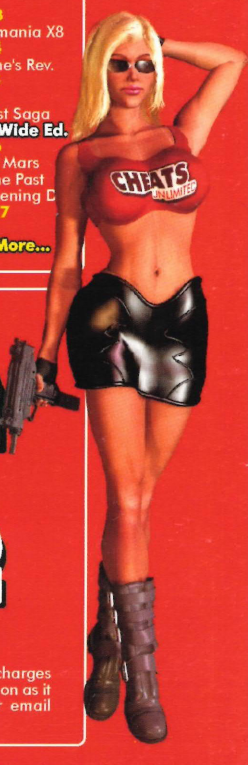
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