

# SLEEPY STATION

Issue #4

REAL

NEWS

Source - my ass

BOOSING  
BRAIN  
DAMAGED

Polish?  
In MY Slavjank?

MARIO  
STRIKERS  
BATTLE LEAGUE  
FOOTBALL

A review and a  
retrospective

GOD OF WAR

Boy of Soy

DOOM 3

Or "How I learned to  
stop worrying and  
love the flashlight"

Also included: Wallpapers, Bondola cards, Comics, Ads!

# Issue Four

Open the door, get on the floor,  
Everybody do the dinosaur.

With this issue Sleepy Station achieves true quarterly status, and I couldn't be prouder. Who would have thought that a bunch of anonymous hackers on a Tawainese finger painting board would make it this far? Writing, designing, and shitposting consistently for almost a year, with fantastic results. You love to see it.

It wasn't an entirely smooth journey though, a lot of things came in the way... Work, education, and even video games took precious time that could have been spent wrangling Scribus and banging one's head against the wall... But thankfully all work got done in time, somehow.

Hope you enjoy this issue, and the many others coming soon. Cheers.



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THE DEEP STATE. A GLOBAL CABAL OF CANNIBALISTIC ELITES.  
THEY THOUGHT THEY COULD GET AWAY WITH IT.  
BUT THEY NEVER PREPARED FOR THE

# BOOMER WITH A COMPUTER



THE DECAF DETECTIVE in DEEP STATE OF LONELINESS  
081920 • A TEENAGE STEPDAD MYSTERY • \$4.20

AUTHOR OF SWOLLEN ANKLES, SWOLLEN VENGEANCE

## QUEEF MALONE



### Have you seen me?

*Samuyil Hyde, 36*



Missing  
Children  
Europe

**☎ 116 000**

# REAL GAMING NEWS

Westwood now owned by PepsiCo



After wiping their ass with people's hopes and dreams, EA sells off their entire Westwood ip catalog to PepsiCo.

A new Dune game is already in the works, leaked by a new Dorito flavor campaign "The Spice Melange" rumored to be laced with LSD and collectible teeth.

A Pepsi Man "Point & Click" adventure may also be in the works, starring the titular Pepsi Man on a quest to quench every gamers thirst and then some.

Nvidia to merge with Intel



The Intel GPU launch was enough to shake the market, despite the lackluster drivers the hardware was solid enough to scare both competitors into offering multi-billion dollars merge deals.

When asked why Intel opted for Nvidia's deal instead of AMD's a spokesperson simply replied with "we wanted usable drivers".

While the merge is only set to happen somewhere within the next 8 years,

insider leaks have already revealed that the new company is going to change colors in a compromise and go for the color purple, perhaps due to Pat Gelsinger's distaste of the "anti-semitic" color cyan.

Video Gamers might want to look forward to the collaborative Gexeon GPU gaming line, the next-gen graphics cards series with a name that combines the famous names of products from both sides and, in Jensen Huang's words, "sounds purple".

Gex teams up with Sub-Zero



Move over, Johnny Cage, there's a new movie star in the ring! Crystal Dynamics has entered into a partnership with Netherrealms and their khaotic kombo kombatants are about to duke it out in Mortal Wombat: What Could Pawssibly Go Wrong! Scorpion vs Soul Reaper! Kano vs Jester Fargus! Sonya Blade vs Lara Croft! Did someone say "Meow"? Dare I dream to see "Toasty!" guy fighting for screen space with the guys from "Off-World Interceptor" FMVs?

Wow to drop subscription-based payments

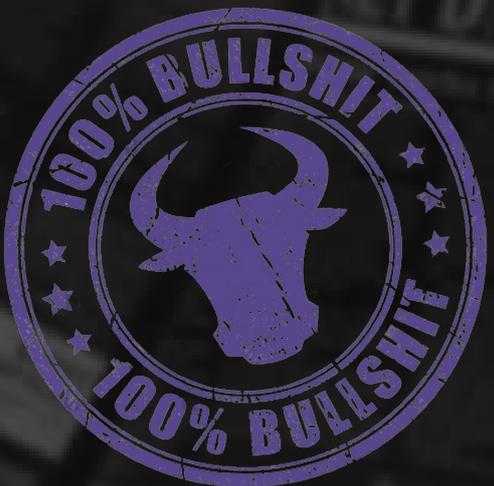


Blizzard has announced this Saturday they will finally be dropping their \$15 a month subscription.

That's right, no more waiting in line at your local WallMart and kicking the fly honeys away from your crotch.

No more looking at your bank account slowly dripping away each month (as if they would ever let your smelly ass inside a bank).

Those days are over. Instead, all you WoW fans, all you Blizzdrones will have to install Diablo Immortal (you guys have phones, right?) and clock in at least 10 hours of playtime per month to renew your World of Warcraft subscription.



# REVIEW

By Nate Higgers



# MARIO STRIKERS BATTLE LEAGUE FOOTBALL



We waited 15 long years...  
...for this crap!?

The Mario Strikers series is the most unusual Mario spinoff Nintendo has ever produced. Developed by Next Level Games, it is nothing like the other Mario Sports titles, and over the years it gained for itself a sort of cult following. It isn't hard to see why, but let's have a brief recap to refresh our minds.

## A SOLID START

The first title in the series, titled "Super Mario Strikers" (also known as "Mario Smash Football" in Europe and Australia for some dumb reason) was released in 2005 for the Gamecube.

The game is an extreme version of European Football (or "soccer" for Ameriburgers) in which two teams of four characters (five including the goalkeeper) consisting of a captain and three sidekicks, will square off in a fast-paced, aggressive match where everything goes on.

While most of football games' mechanics like the ability to pass, dash, tackle players, shoot and lob the ball are still present here, Strikers has no faults, penalties, free kicks, corner kicks, nor throw-ins.

In this game, rough play is not only allowed, but encouraged.



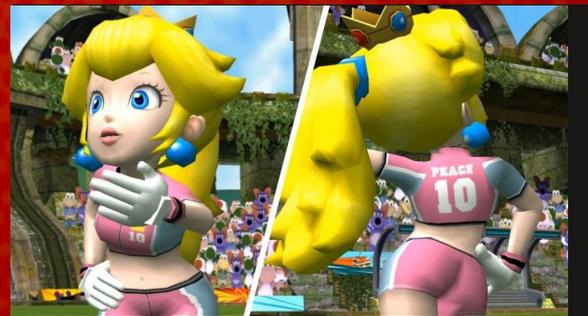
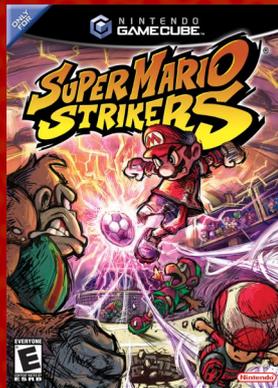
Characters not in possession can tackle and hit opponents with or without the ball, or even push them against the electric fence that surrounds the pitch, making them scream in agonizing pain, that is always amusing.

Also, similar to the Mario Kart series, a different selection of items can be obtained and used during the gameplay to

either aid your team, or hinder the opposing one.

The list of items includes classics such as banana peels, green shells, red shells, bob-bombs, invincibility stars, even a chain chomp and many more, for a total of 14 items.

In addition to the normal shots, Strikers also features the "super strikes", a stylish powerful shot that can be activated by the team's captain and score two goals instead of one, useful to turn a losing match upside down or simply remark your superiority over the opponent.



Peach shows off her confidence, and nice ASSets.

There are a total of 13 playable characters in the first title, 9 team captains selectable between Mario, Luigi, Peach, Daisy, Yoshi, Donkey Kong, Wario, Waluigi, the unlockable "Super Team", and 4 sidekicks, that are selectable between Toads, Koopas, Hammer Bros. and Birdos.

Each captain performs more or less identically, the sidekicks instead, have slightly reduced abilities and cannot perform Super Strikes.

What made Strikers really stand out though, was how the usually happy and cheerful Mario characters are, for the first time in this series, angry and packed with attitude and personality.

Mario looks angry as if he's going out for war, Peach acts like a diva that oozes confidence and sex-appeal, and this is where Waluigi really started having an individual personality rather than being simply thin Wario or bad Luigi.

The characters aren't the only thing to shine in this game, the stadium available are great too, in fact, other than a mostly "normal" football stadium with a grass pitch, this game also offers a variety of differently themed ones, going from a gritty wasteland-like pitch made of rusty iron, to a futuristic one with the crowd standing inside giant capsules located all around the playfield, all crazy stuff that we never saw on a Mario game ever before.

Each of the 7 available stages are cool in their own way and variety surely isn't something missing here.

Game modes include grudge match, cup battle, super cup battle, custom battle and striker 101 (a tutorial that can be played with other players) giving the game a decent amount of longevity.

All in all, a solid debut for a new series.

## BIGGER, BETTER, ANGRIER

"Mario Strikers: Charged Football" (simply "Charged" in burgerland) is the sequel to the first game and the second title in the series released in 2007 for the Nintendo Wii.

What's even the point of a sequel to exist if it isn't "more, bigger and better" than its predecessor?

That's exactly what "Charged" achieves, just imagine the first title in the series, but on steroids.

The sequel goes for an even more gritty, edgy tone that works surprisingly well without being cheesy or taking itself too seriously.

Instead of wearing standard football kits like the previous game, the characters now wear armor and helmets, and even the ball goes from a normal football to a glowing metal sphere, making it clear to the player that this time they are not fucking around, this is war.

The characters' cool attitude got overhauled, and you will see characters like Waluigi mocking and bullying their opponents (his "suck it" celebration is infamous), Daisy and Peach posing and playing around with their sex appeal, the same Daisy getting pissed off with her own teammates who cower in fear when she loses, or other characters like DK throwing a tantrum by fucking shit up when they get scored.



Every character has 5 scoring animations and 2 losing animations, and most of them are really entertaining if not hilarious.

Charged offers a roster of 12 captains and 8 selectable sidekicks, for a total of 20 playable characters.

Captains are the returning ones from the previous game, plus the new entries Bowser, with Bowser Jr., Diddy Kong and Petey Piranha to be unlocked.

This time characters play differently and have different stats, divided in categories such as offensive, defensive, balanced, power or playmaker.

On the sidekicks side, we have the returning Toads, Koopas, Hammer Bros. and Birdos, with Boos, Dry Bones, Monty Moles and Shy Guys making their debut on the pitch.

The mentioned personality of the Mario characters gets highlighted by a personal goal horn that perfectly fits each one of them.



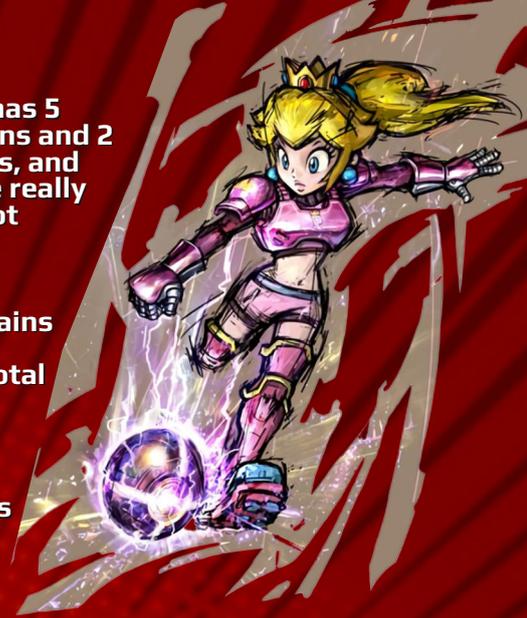
Peach's theme is a pop tune that makes her diva personality shine, Wario has some accordion music that goes along with his goofy and comedic nature, and DK's theme is some african drum beats that is a perfect fit for a savage ape (if you know what i mean).

This sequel features 10 brand new arenas, this time with their own unique gimmicks that affect gameplay like tornados, ice, sunlight beams and lava, adding more variety gameplay-wise, and with the returning 7 arenas from the previous game, makes a total of 17 arenas to choose from.

Game modes include Cups, Domination mode, challenges, and for the first time in the series, online mode, all for a great replayability.

Widely regarded as the best one in the series to this day, "Mario Strikers: Charged Football" took everything that worked in the first game and built on top of it, elevating it to new heights.

Masterpiece.



This brings us to current year (+7) and a new Mario Strikers finally comes out after 15 long years of absence.

Was all this wait worth it?

Let's find out.



Announced at the Nintendo Direct of February 2022, the reveal trailer got both the old fans of the originals, and newfags who merely jumped on the bandwagon pretending they were around when the originals came out, excited alike for this new one.

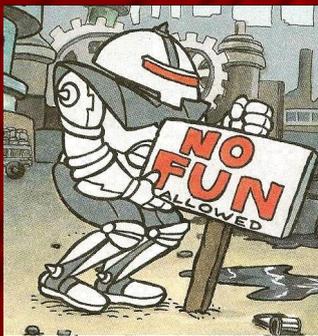
After the initial excitement though, something started to feel wrong, and people began to wonder if Nintendo was going to fuck this up.

As the release date quickly approached, in fact, no other information about the game was shared by Nintendo since the reveal trailer.

They clearly weren't so confident about their product, and fans had all the reasons to be worried.

## REVIEW - A DISAPPOINTING RETURN

15 years have gone by after the last game came out, and Nintendo has since established what is known as "The Mario Mandate", a set of rules Nintendo enforces on their developers and contractors on how Mario and related characters should be portrayed throughout media, requiring Mario's world and characters to look and act always the same across all titles involving them, causing the brand and products to stagnate as a result.



A Nintendo supervisor applies the Mario mandate, making sure that the game stays as bland, dull and sterile as possible.

This is sadly reflected on Battle League's overall tone and art style.

Gone is the attitude of the previous titles, the characters all act like their usual cheerful, inoffensive, boring selves, removing by fact, one of the main selling points of the Strikers series, robbing it of its very own identity.

Sadly, the edgy attitude that made the series so cool and much loved in the first place, isn't the only thing missing in this new installment.

The first noticeable problem once the game starts, is the disgraceful lack of content, with the worst offender being an absolute pathetic roster of only 10 characters, that in a 4 vs 4 game, it means that 80% of the entire game roster will always be present on the pitch (sure won't get repetitive huh?), leaving players to play more or less the same match over and over again, unless we also count clones, but that will only end up making things even worse.



The depressing character select screen. Battle League gets rid of the captain and sidekick mechanic, not for an intentional and conscious game design choice, but because the limited roster is so poor that it cannot be implemented.

The repetitive nature of this game is made even more evident by the characters' scoring animations, that while nicely animated (although not as fun or charming as previous games'), are only two for character, while the losing animation is only one.

Watching Wario eat that garlic after scoring a goal gets old after the third time you see it.

Strangely enough, for some reason all the scoring and losing animations happen in a empty pitch, and none of them has the characters interact with their teammates or opponents, which is a bummer.

The crowd doesn't show any reaction at all, and will just repeat the same animation cycle over the course of the entire match, with no cheers, roars or jumping whenever your team scores.

They won't even wave flags nor hold banners with your team's logo and colors, they do NOTHING to add excitement to the match.



The new entry Rosalina would have benefited from the Strikers' treatment the most, as some attitude and sex-appeal would have done wonders for her. Unfortunately, in Battle League she's still her usual dull, charisma-void of a character.



The selection of stadiums seems to be another victim of the infamous "Mario mandate", in fact, apart from having a ridiculous selection of only 5 of them available, their look and theming are the most safe and boring the series has ever had.

We have the mushroom kingdom, Bowser's lava castle, Luigi's haunted mansion, DK's jungle, and Peach's castle, substantially all the boring staples of the classic Mario franchise with no room for anything fresh or that stands out anymore.

To make things worse, all these stadiums look like a reskin of the same one, every single one of them features a grass pitch with the only difference being a slightly different shade of green, so during gameplay you won't even notice the difference between each other, and soon enough, you'll even stop bothering picking one as you realize it is mostly pointless.



One side is the Mushroom Kingdom, the other is DK's jungle, so which one is which? They look the fucking same!

No unique hazards, no different weather, no different field type, nothing.

Even the number of items got drastically reduced to only 5, with only mushroom, green shell, red shell, banana peel, bob-bomb and star coming back from previous games.

## GRAPHICS

The game graphics look pretty good, nothing groundbreaking though, as low poly elements and some washed up textures are still present here and there.

Characters are very well animated, as expected from Next Level Games.

The game runs at 60fps but for some reason, the scoring and losing animations are locked at 30fps, which is very noticeable and it sucks.



The only thing with a subtle hint of past games' attitude are the hyper strikes, that are very well animated and make use of the iconic sketchy artstyle, definitely the coolest part of the game.

## MUSIC AND SOUND

The OST goes for a hard rock soundtrack that goes from just okay to generic and forgettable.

Devs made the questionable choice to keep this same genre of music for every character's goal horn, probably an attempt to make up for the edge lost, but this attempt fell flat, as it solved nothing and only caused the OST to sound even more monotonous and samey, depriving each character of a more fitting theme that would make them stand out like in previous games.

The sound effects are very good, and really give that "oomph" impact that a game like this needs, especially during the hyper strikes.

The voice samples for the characters are lazily recycled from Mario Kart, that's unexcusable since the previous games had original voice lines recorded specifically for them, this tells you how little effort was put into it.

Not even the decency to at least recycle them from previous Strikers games, so now the characters shout generic "WOOHOO", "WAHAA" and "LET'S-A-GO!", rather than something useful like Luigi's "OPEN, OPEN!!" or Wario's "GIMME THE BALL" that at least made sense.

The crowd's choruses are extremely underwhelming, nothing but the same looping buzz for all the match's entirety, no matter what's happening on the pitch, in fact, even after scoring a goal or executing a hyper strike, the sound of the siren will be the only thing to signal a goal gone in, no roars, boos, not even a simple "GOOOAL!" scream coming from the audience, killing any excitement of the moment.

## GAME MODES

The game modes offered by battle league are the bare minimum, no story mode, missions, challenges, nor any other fun or decent single player mode, in fact we only have:

Quick Match: Self-explanatory.

Cup Battle: A bland elimination tournament, which, apart from a very brief cutscene of the winning team holding the cup, is the same as playing 3 quick matches.

Then there's a basic tutorial that barely does its job, and the mandatory online shit, Strikers Club.

Strikers Club allows you to create your own team and be joined by up to other 19 people in periodic seasons against other 4 teams, that will end up with promotions (and related coin prize) and relegations.

Every win by your team gives you 6 point, 2 for every tie, and 1 for any loss.

The coins earned in this mode can be used to customize your team's stadium and even upgrade it (with an insane amount of grinding, of course)

The idea doesn't even sound half bad on paper, too bad this mode is poorly implemented.

For starters, once you pick your own striker, you are stuck with whatever characters and related build the other members of the team choose, so if you have a team with 3 other people and all of them are unoriginal fucks who picked Mario, you are forced to play with your striker and 3 Mario clones, cool huh?



out of 6 for the home kit, and other 6 for the away kit, so you can't pick two different colors and choose the pattern to combine them (in case you wanted your team's uniform to be red and blue, for instance) like any real football team.

So you are simply going to be yet another red, pink, orange, yellow or green team like other thousands of them.

Also, it's stupid how 6 colors are exclusive to the home jersey and 6 for the away one, why can't i pick black or blue for the first kit?

It makes no sense, and it's just a missed opportunity to make your team really unique and actually feel like yours.



Strikers Club doesn't offer any way to communicate with your team members, so you can't even suggest them any tactics nor tell them to change their characters and build because they are shit, or there's already 10 of them.

Once the season begins, you may find your team competing in a round in which a team with 20 active members all doing their part and playing on a daily basis participates.

In that case, if your team has not as many people or your team members aren't as active, competing with said teams becomes a cumbersome, exhausting task.

Farming points to try keep up with those teams then starts feeling like a job, and thus, not fun.

This mode is a chore and a waste of time, it would have been a far better idea to turn this into an offline mode to be played at your own pace, without holding the customizable stadiums and elements hostage to this pay-walled online mode, limiting the online play to simple quick battles or elimination cups.

The customization, in this mode and in general, while an overdue and appreciated addition, is also really poor and limited.

There are only 5 available patterns for your jersey and you can only pick one primary color



Here's your customization bro. Only five selectable patterns, FIVE, and only a single color can be picked out of six. Classic football patterns like horizontal stripes, checkers or half-and-half are also missing. To even call this "customization" is a joke.

## GEAR

Speaking of customization, a new addition to this game is the gear, that allows you to buy and equip different armor to change the characters' stats.

This won't just increase your character's stats and make it better though, but it's just a rebalancing of its values, meaning that each piece of gear, when applied, will decrease a particular stat by a certain amount in order to increase another stat by a certain amount.

So you can turn Bowser faster at the expense of some of his strength, make Peach stronger but slower, and so on.



At the end of the day, the gear system works pretty well and is a welcome addition, too bad that while some gear looks very cool, some other looks like crap (and is often the one you need)

## ONLINE

There's not a lot to say about the online, other than when it works, it barely does its job, when it doesn't, the game will turn into a slide show and you won't have any control of what the fuck is going on due to the massive input latency.

Speaking of lag, it's really baffling how the devs added stuff like perfect passes and perfect tackles that require such perfect timing in a game that is so badly affected by input lag.

At the moment of writing this review, the online is dying already, no matter what time of the day you play on, you will always find more or less the same 10 teams (either turbo autists or random jewtube e-celebs with their ass lickens) that apparently are playing 24/7 losing sleep to farm points in Strikers League's seasons.



The fact that they covered Peach's navel is a crime, especially considering Nintendo had no issues showing her in a bikini in Odyssey

## "GAMEPLAY IS THE ONLY THING THAT MATTERS!"

While the gameplay is the most important thing in a game, it isn't the only thing that matters, especially in a fully priced release like this game.

Gameplay alone can't save a game if anything else is missing (2/3 of the content in this case) unappealing, or there's jackshit to do, in fact, not even solid gameplay can't stop a game from getting old and boring quickly if there's nothing else besides of that.

So, is Battle League's gameplay good, at least?

Well, not really.

When you play the first matches to get the hang of it, or as long as you play on easy or casually with friends, it seems there is nothing wrong with the game, and you may even have a good time with it, but when you play in hard mode or against another skilled player, all the flaws withing the gameplay start hitting you in the face.

First problem is the AI.

The AI is completely retarded, and you'll often feel like you are playing not only against your opponents, but against your own teammates as well, in fact, not only they do nothing to

aid you, but it often feels like they are even actively helping your opponent.

First of all, their positioning is shit: for instance, when you steal the ball from the opponent and run toward the goal for a counterattack, your teammates (at least some of them) should be following you to give you support, but no, most of the time they stand still like idiots or even move backwards, keeping your team stuck to their own side of the pitch, making it easy for the opponent to nip your attacking phase in the bud.

When you attack, you are either alone because of the aforementioned problem, or, when your teammates get to move, they will be anywhere except where they are needed.

If you head to the sideline to make a cross, you will rarely find any teammates in the goal area to receive the ball; if, on the other hand, your teammates are already in the area, they will back away at the moment of the cross for no reason, giving the opponents plenty of time to return to their area to defend, or receive the ball in their place (infuriating).

If you manage to get past the opponent's rearguard and head toward the goal on your own, they will pointlessly stick to your butt instead of spacing out and heading to the sides of the penalty area to eventually receive the ball.

When it's the opponents' turn to attack, they will spread out, roll out the red carpet and give them plenty of space to maneuver the attack and head for the goal, instead of regrouping in front of the goal area and do something to obstruct them and avoid getting scored, this assuming they haven't fallen behind as usual.



Stars make you invincible, run faster and shoot better. It's basically a free goal. This wouldn't be an issue if the game didn't start spamming them to the losing player when he's only down by 2 or 3 goals until he manages to undeservedly equalize.

Your stupid teammates will also frequently ignore any item boxes or hyperstrike orbs that are right next to them, only for the opponents that were further away to take them instead, so, every time an item or orb appears, you'll have to interrupt your maneuver to grab it yourself before the rival does, breaking the game's flow.





Why is Toad celebrating with some random toads instead of doing so with his actual teammates? The lack of any interaction between teammates and opponents in animations is a huge let down.

Sometimes, when you find yourself in the middle of chaos and quickly pass the ball to a teammate to ease the pressure, this one instead of taking possession of it, will stay still like an idiot and let the ball bounce off him, which will then end up being inevitably retrieved by the opponent.

The pitch was significantly reduced in size this time around, making everything so cramped in it, that leaves very little room for dribbling or tactics, and the visual clutter that comes from it doesn't help either.

In the most heated situations you will have trouble telling players apart when they are all huddled together, and in those moments you will often find yourself mashing buttons randomly, hoping for the best.

For this same reason, the gameplay was also slowed down considerably, making the developers' choice of a smaller pitch even more baffling, as no single benefit came out of it.

Another problem is the goalkeeper.

The goalkeeper is completely unreliable and really inconsistent, he often misses weak shots from a side while going into god mode on the other side, unfairly blocking even the better angled and more powerful shot, causing you to have matches where the skilled player just can't get the ball inside no matter what, while the noob easily scores by quickly pressing the shoot button as soon as he trepasses the line that separates your side of the pitch from his.

The only moment you have some sort of control over the goalie, is when you have to defend yourself from a hyper strike, in that case the game asks you to repeatedly press the A button in order to fill a bar (and supposedly block it).



It doesn't matter if you smashed the A button repeatedly with a sledgehammer to fill that bar, you better pray it's your lucky day, because if the game decided that the hyper strike has to go in, it will go in, no matter what.

Problem is, that the ball can still go in regardless if you managed to fill said bar or not, making you question the whole point of this mechanic.

Switching between teammates is also a pain in the ass, because as you press the dedicated button, the game switches to a teammate that is far away rather than prioritizing the one closest to ball as it should, so when the opponent is either attacking or even worse, charging a hyperstrike and you have a teammate right next to him, you aren't able to quickly tackle him as the game switches for another teammates that is on the opposite side of the pitch, and by the time you manage to control the one you wanted, it is already too late.

All these issues can make playing this game into a very unbalanced and frustrating experience that doesn't award skill, but luck.

In conclusion, the basics are there, but the gameplay still needed to be polished a whole lot more to be somewhat enjoyable. (and fair)



Waluigi does an excellent impression of Dick Dastardly

### POST LAUNCH SUPPORT (or lack of thereof)

Like all Nintendo titles that these days get released before the end of development, the developers promised to support the game with "free updates" (aka finishing development by adding the content that was supposed to be in the game at launch) but the question is, will Next Level Games be able to polish this turd?

The short answer is probably not, there's just way too many things that still need to be added, polished, fixed and changed for this game to turn into a good game, let alone be on par with the high standards set by the previous titles.

It would take them almost a miracle for that to happen, and that also depends if Nintendo is willing to give them the time and resources necessary to fix this mess, but I am afraid to say that whatever they do, it will be too little to late.

The damage is done, and Battle League's reputation is already in the toilet.





Most people who got the game will get bored of it (if they aren't already) and move on to other things before waiting **FUCKING MONTHS** for a new update to finally come out, and when it will come out, those who didn't sell their copies yet, will probably only check the new content for a bit before leaving the game again, rinse and repeat for every new update.



And of fucking course, since current Nintendo is shit and we can't have nice things, just like with Waluigi's crotch chop, Daisy's famous "hot stuff" celebration got cut in Battle League as well (T\_T)

The first update including Daisy, Shy Guy, a desert themed arena and the Knight gear is already out, with Nintendo promising 2 more updates "for 2022".

This seems like scammy Nintendo being ambiguous on purpose here, basically keeping the door open for more but having the plausible deniability to say that they never promised any other updates beyond 2022, fucking cunts.



No, this crap won't keep the game "fresh", that only works when the game ships complete and the updates contain ACTUAL additional content, not what was supposed to be there since day one.

If this is really all we are going to get, it means that the game will be stuck with only 16 characters, 8 arenas and 9 sets of gear (still less than the prequel that came out 15 years before) which will do nothing for this dumpster fire, simply turning a shit game into a less shitty game. (And no new game modes? Really!?)

For now, we just need to wait and see if this game will finally be completed one day, and if by then will turn into a decent game at least, but for the time being, you will have a better time playing any of the previous games in the series, either on the original hardware or through an emulator with some HD texture patches.

## CONCLUSION

Overall the game looks, plays and feels like an early build rather than a well polished, finished product.

The content offered is so poor (and weak) that you'll experience everything this game has to offer in less than a single hour.

This is unacceptable for the so anticipated third entry in a such beloved series that hasn't had a new title in 15 fucking years.

"Fuck-a-you, Nintendo!"

-Nate Higgers

### PROS

- +Nice graphics and animations
- +Can be fun for a few casual matches

### CONS

- Pathetic roster of only 10 characters in a 4vs4 game.
- The attitude that made the series cool is sadly gone
- Presentation is massively downgraded over Charged
- Scoring animations are very few and get old fast
- No story mode, nor any other fun game modes
- Stadiums look all the same, pitch is too small, no hazards.
- The OST sounds generic and samey
- Voice lines shamefully recycled from Mario Kart
- No content whatsoever, there's nothing to do
- Gets repetitive and boring quickly, zero longevity
- Devs don't know what "if it isn't broken, don't fix it" means
- Strikers Club is shit and a waste of time.
- Feels more like a Free-to-play game than a full title
- Way too expensive for what little it offers
- Gameplay still rough around the edges, feels like a beta
- Everything else



### GAME INFO

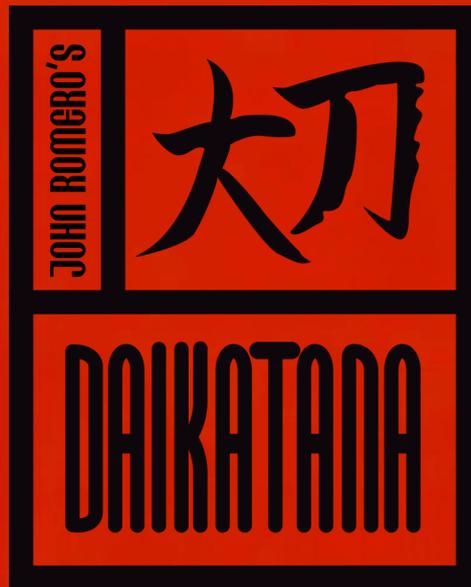
**Title:** Mario Strikers Battle League Football  
**Developer:** Next Level Games  
**Publisher:** Nintendo  
**Release Date:** June 2022  
**Price:** Way too much, ain't worth it

## FINAL SCORE



/10

FROM THE GUY WHO IS STILL LIVING OFF DOOM'S SUCCESS BECAUSE HE HASN'T DONE ANYTHING DECENT EVER SINCE:



"Into the trash it goes"  
Penn Jillette



UNLOCK JOHN ROMERO'S  
LAZY EYE AS A WEAPON!

### MIKIKO EBIHARA

Hot girl who keeps blabbering about being a strong woman who needs no man, until she finds herself in the most dire situations, like responsibilities or being proven wrong. Then she asks for help from any thirsty beta who will play the white knight for her in the vain hope of getting some. Gets cured by Hiro's dick and understands her true purpose in life: breeding kids and making sandwiches for him.



### SUPERFLY JOHNSON

A low-IQ welfare leech who blames his own shortcomings on something he calls "racism." Extremely insecure, for some unknown reason he insists on calling his tiny three-inch weenie "bbc" and never shuts up about it no matter what the topic of discussion is. Particularly loud and obnoxious, he constantly makes up shit about his ancestry and achievements, and throws a tantrum whenever someone doesn't buy his bullshit or points out his inadequacy. He's a closet homosexual.

### HIRO MIYAMOTO

The main character and direct descendant of game designer Shigeru. He travels back in time to recover the ancient samurai sword, the Daikatana, so he can sell it to a pawn shop near his home and stop being a wage slave. He dreams of a life banging Mikiko all day, drinking wine and no worries.

# JOHN ROMERO IS A BITCH.

**EIDOS**  
INTERACTIVE

Suck It Bown, JOHN



[www.ionstorm.com](http://www.ionstorm.com)

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# GOD OF WAR (2018)

The Bitching and The Moaning.

- A rant by anon.

I am a stubborn old man, but I try to justify it by saying "I am a man of Principle!". "Man of Pringles" more like it, fat fuck...

I got into an argument with a friend of mine who insisted on the flawed logic of "How do you know it's shit if you haven't played it yet?" in reference to God of War (2018). nuGod of War. God of Soy. Boy of War. I hate this trend of naming a sequel after the original. How long has that been going on for now, a decade? It was around the same time the Writers Guild went on a strike, when was that? ... Oh, 2007, of course. My friend guaranteed that I had only to play the game and that alone would change my mind. So he lends me his Bloodborne station and the game and I spent a week slogging through it.

First I'll get through the positives:  
- It looks great while standing still.

Now for the negatives:

First of all, like with most modern games riding on the coat-tail of originals, it's nothing like the original God of War. It doesn't play like one. From time to time it may feel similar to the originals, but after playing Ghost of Sparta for an hour I was certain there was no GoW DNA in the reboot. Everything feels cramped and stiff, your movement is sluggish, the camera is either slow as shit or fast as fuck. The angle makes it difficult to read the battlefield and focusing on one enemy at a time leads to Kratos getting fucked up the platonic ass by unseen enemies and projectiles. Oh sure, there's an indicator that a projectile is coming your-a-way, but there's no telling how close it is or how fast it's traveling. If there was, I sure as hell couldn't read it in the heat of clunky battle. Naturally, the fighting becomes more hectic and complicated the longer you play it, the more moves you unlock and more bullshit enemy types are introduced.



Mr. Playstation, I don't feel so good...

A lot of enemies get reused again and again. Let me compare it with the enemy count from the original.

2018	2005 Original
- Zombies	- Zombies
- Zombies with shields	- Zombies with shields
- Zombie casters	- Zombies with bows
- Werewolves	- Minotaurs
- Ancients (like 5 total)	- Harpies
- Ogres	- Gorgons or Medusas
- Revenant witches	- Centaurs
- Flying eyes	- Scythe legionaries
- Flying shielders	- Cerberus
- Flying suiciders	- Cerberus pups
- Bug elves	- Cyclopes
	- Wraiths
	- Satyrs
	- Sirens

Eh, it's not THAT big of a difference. That's of course not counting bosses and different permutations of fodder-type enemies. Most enemies can be defeated employing the same approach with the exception of Revenants/Witches, which first need to be shot by the boy, and Bug Elves who are just plain annoying. They keep flying away and throwing pocket sand in your face. Fucking pain in the ass to aim at, especially mid-air, your best bet is to stun and then use up all your magic attacks to burst-damage their asses. Speaking of magic, you only get two attacks at a time, all of magic is now on cooldown instead of using a mana resource. While I personally used to hoard magic up to use on AoE attacks to get out of sticky situations, these attacks can be interrupted and miss entirely. Now you can say

it's an increase in difficulty and complexity, but it's a god damn fuckfest going on in my brain whenever I get through a slow wind-up animation only to miss an annoying bug elf and be left sitting there with my dick out and a cooldown to



In the days of darkness men fea

wait on. Instead of leveling up an entire school of magic (or a magic relic, usually 4 in each GoW title), you now have to level up each magic attack separately, which is fucking expensive. You don't know what kind of enemies you're going to run into in the future, so what kind of attack do you level up? Each attack has points spread out in 3 categories (Attack power, Stun and Magic), and while some attacks are really useful at stunning, you might be building your character around magic elemental damage, so you're missing out on build optimization.

You could say "Just play whatever you want to play, the game is giving you every chance to upgrade whatever you wish to upgrade", but here-in lies the issue: instead of just giving you all the combos and attacks outright like they did in classic GoW, you're limited by the XP and material resources if you want to unlock and upgrade every move. How can you experiment if it's impossible to try out every move? Not unless you do all those fucking sidequests, you can't. So you best go on your merry way around Midgard.



Did you forget you were in mythical Scandinavia? Well the game will be sure to remind you every chance it

Kratos is no longer mad, he's just disapointed.

gets. Frankly, the amount of annoyances I had to endure throughout the entire game is staggering, I don't even know where to begin or how to structure it without sounding like a rambling schizo.

It's all very "in your face". Even more so than the brutality of combat in classic GoW, it's a non-stop



red not the sword and the lance ...

panging. No-one ever shuts up, no-one talks like they should aside from Kratos and one of the smiths, perhaps. It's like you're stuck in the woods with a LARping group of New-Yorkers, one of which is a germaphobe. I half expected the kid to dab on the enemies. Speaking of the kid, holy fuck is he an annoying cunt. Imagine Elizabeth from Bioshock Infinite, but angsty and with less R34. Oh he goes through a whole character arc, whoopy-fucking-doo, I still had to listen to all his whining and backtalk and I couldn't even throw him off a cliff like in Dragon's Dogma. The most I could do to alleviate my frustrations with the boy was running into him and shoving him out of the way. At one point of the story he gets sick and you're finally rid of the bastard for an hour or so. Best part of the game. Another character that won't shut up is the beheaded guy, but at least he's trying to sound era-appropriate and I won't lie, the stories he told during boat rides weren't half bad. Too bad you only get him mid-way through the story. Fuck Cory Barlog. I guess becoming a father turns you into an insufferable bitch. Oh golly gee, aren't we fucking cinematic! It's all one take! Boyhood, it took 12 years to make! Finally, a videogame made for adults such as myself! Let's try to tug at players' heartstrings! That'll make an emotional connection! Too

bad every single character is an annoying spastic. Mid-life crisis must be a bitch. What the fuck happened to Santa Monica Studio? An undisclosed number of people were let go between God of War 3 and Ascension (the weakest of classic GoW games) and leadership changed a couple of times, but Cory "daddy" Barlog seems to have been the series director since GoW2. How did it go from babby's first cuhhrayzee brawler to The Last of Us: Son Edition? It is so god damn preachy and surface level, it's like it was written by someone who never grew out of their teenage phase.

Right, so we've covered the awful enemies and camera, characters and writing. What else is there? Collectibles, itemization, side-quests... There's a million of 'em. All of the above. You don't have to collect them, but it helps you level up Kratos and boy throughout the game. You could also be a completionist sped, for all I care, then you'd probably squeeze about 20 hours or so out of the game. Some of these collectibles are locked behind challenges and while the post-campaign challenges from classic GoW games were nut-bustingly hard, the ones here are plain frustrating. The first time I ever opened a rift challenge, I simply got decked in the face with a 1 hit KO. It was mostly funny actually, because the rest of the enemy model hadn't materialized yet, but I literally got punched through a dimensional rift, it was like a scene from a cartoon or something. After reloading a save, I tried staying clear of these rifts, aside from occasional instances when my curiosity got the better of me. These rifts spawn enemies 2 levels above you (for reference I only got up to like lvl 5 after finishing the campaign) or maybe they're at a fixed level and you're expected to fight them at a specific level. There's rifts, there's side-quests (self-contained areas with their own puzzles and enemy encounters), valkyrie fights, dwarven hoards, fire realm challenges... And all this trouble is to get XP and new armor pieces.

Unfortunately, this ain't FashionFrame, so you'll have to wear the ugliest armors in order to get the best bonuses. If you watch any of the playthroughs online, you'll notice most people equipping this ugly garb, myself included:



Like why man? Because it really brings out the rage in his eyes? Why would you add cosmetic elements to a game and make the good items ungodly awful to look at?

I would have preferred to not have any of the cosmetics at all, just make it straight upgrades. I'm here to stab mythology in the face, not spend hours fiddling in the inventory screen and min-maxing skill points to make sure I crit enough times. If I wanted to do that, I'd play Final Fantasy. Speaking of which, I noticed a little similarity between this and the recent FF7 remake. Whatever Materia you use appears physically on your equipment, same in nuGoW: whatever magic skill you have equipped is visible on your axe.

And that about covers the negatives. Fuck this game and fuck Cory Barlog.



The axe throw is not that satisfying.

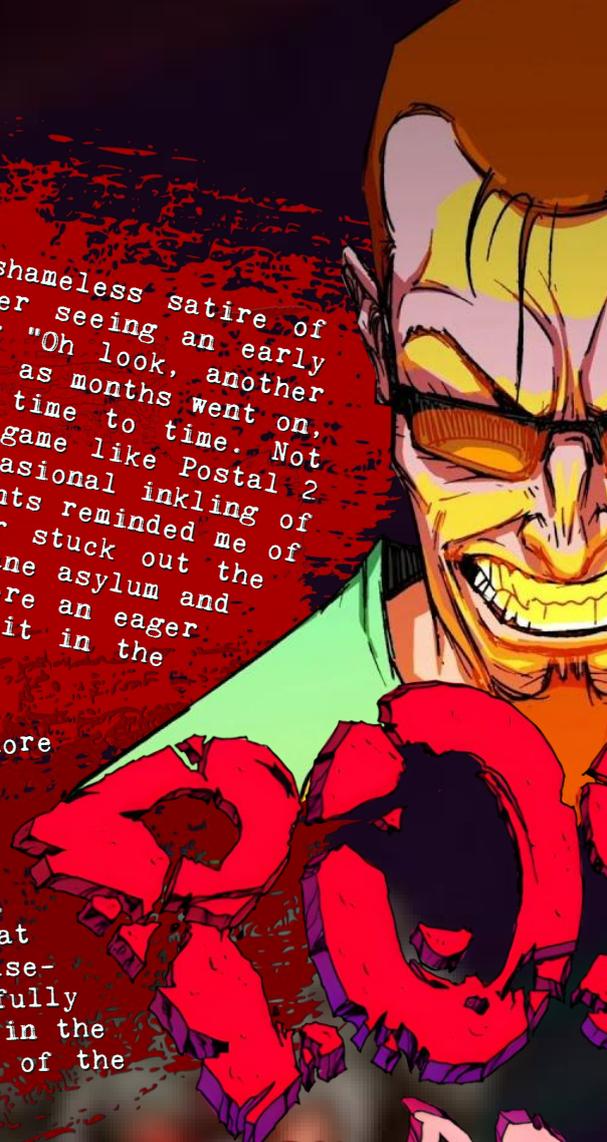


This boss fight is so good we're gonna use 3 times! (the last one is alright, actually)

Polaks managed to produce a fun shooter, keeping shameless satire of the olden Postal 2 days alive and well. I remember seeing an early version of PBD trailer with stock weapons thinking "Oh look, another studio trying to ride the boomshoot hype train". But as months went on, I caught myself checking up on this project from time to time. Not simply because I have an undying hope to relive a game like Postal 2 for the first time again, but because I saw an occasional inkling of creativity. The weapon models looked fun, environments reminded me of American McGee's Alice and Psychonauts. The former stuck out the most while navigating the twisting halls of an insane asylum and the latter in a warped cul-de-sac level. If you were an eager beaver like myself, you've probably already seen it in the demo.

Like I said, this is not your classic Postal 2 mission-based fare, this plays more like the result of cross-breeding the original Postal with Quake, twisted perceptions of reality, innocent bystanders, nail-guns and all. But it retains Postal 2 humor with an unhealthy sprinkling of internet memes or current-year jokes. I mean, I can understand they had to include at least some of them for that relevant-meme-impulse-buyer market, but damn, why would you purposefully make your game age like that piece of meat I left in the corner of my pantry? Oh well, it's not like some of the P2 jokes didn't age like moldy grapes.

The arenas start out very open with some liberal movement options and you learn to fear the claustrophobic monster closets because by mid-game, when burst damage and hit-scan enemies are introduced, you will know what it's like to have your balls pulled the scared turtle. The lizardmen and deathstar gimps are perfect example for each of those. Get too close to a lizardman at the beginning of his attack animation and you won't have time to see your health melt away. Because by the time your eyes move to the HP counter, you'll already be dead. A gang of deathstar gimps and illuminati can reduce you to a pile of



BR  
DAM



SHOT  
RAT



A workhors  
early to mid  
coming withi  
distance of  
enemies is

ash if you stand still  
in their sight.

So that's the first  
lesson of the game:  
keep moving. BUT! Unlike  
nuDoom, you're not  
forced to keep moving  
all the time. You can  
still funnel enemies  
into tight corridors,  
you can block most attack  
with your shovel and  
repel projectiles back  
at any enemy  
(though I never  
got the hang of  
the timing,  
often it  
would only succeed  
if it were a knee-



jerk reaction rather than a planned counter). A lot of  
weapon ideas were lifted from other games like the  
Titanfall smart pistol, nuDoom grapple-shotgun and  
homing Ultrakill minigun. Most, if not all 9 weapons  
remain useful until the end of the game. Some even have  
semi-hidden mechanics, like the Shovel being able to  
block lasers and the Brain Fuck Gun 69000's lightning  
chains among wet enemies (read: unwilling golden shower  
participants).

Speaking of man-made  
lemonade, this isn't your regular urination, this  
is advanced challenge pissing! You've read this right:  
challenge pissing! How does it work? If you switch to piss  
right after firing a slow semi-automatic weapon like a shotgun  
or rocket launcher, your firing animation gets reset! Don't  
wait! Don't reload! Don't fuck with me or I'll drink this  
bottle of hot sauce and turn my lizard into a napalm belching  
dragon! The Dude can also drink liquid nitrogen and suspicious  
moonshine to freeze and confuse enemies respectively. There's  
also quick pills for bullet time, steroids for increased melee  
damage and an akimbo power-up that temporarily doubles your damage  
output as well as granting infinite ammo for the duration of said  
power-up.

AIN  
TAGED

TGUN  
ING

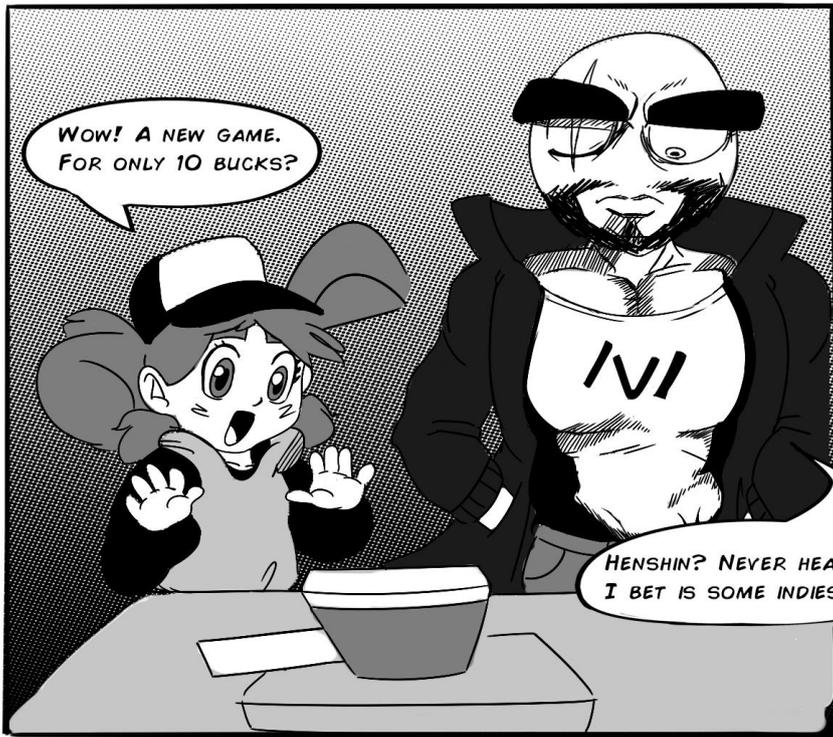
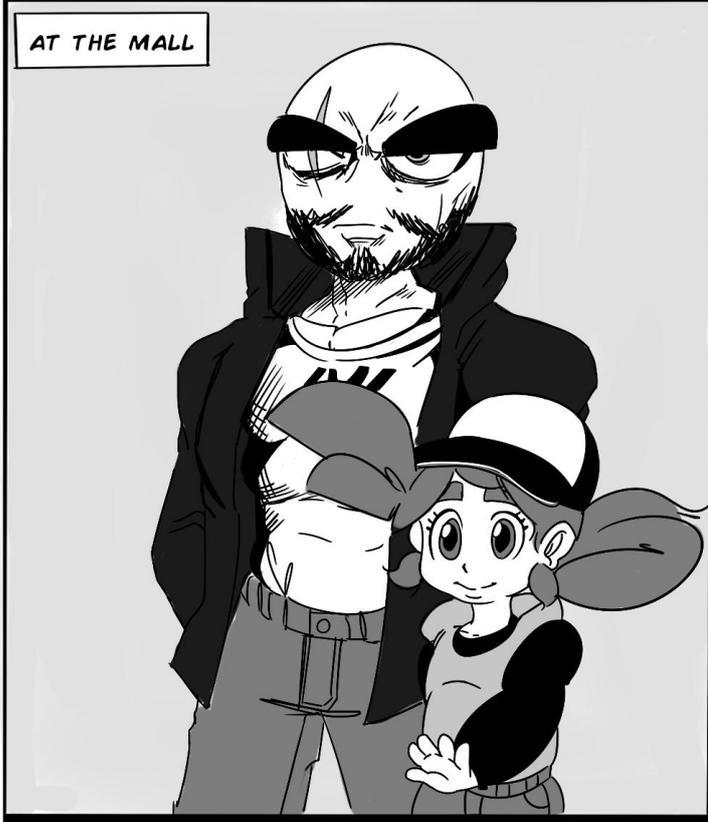


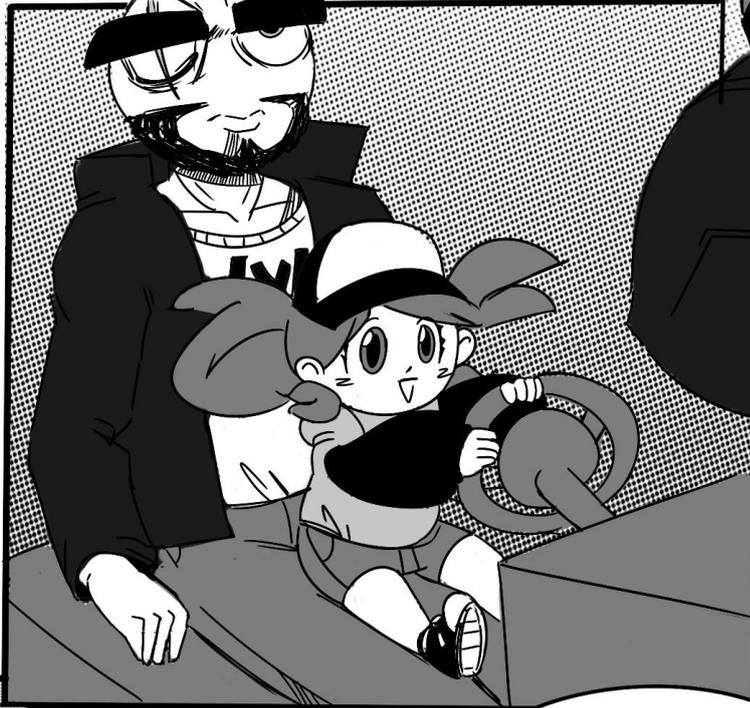
My playtime rounded out  
to about 8-9 hours,  
including meandering and  
looking for easter eggs.  
Very fun, looking  
forward to replaying it  
after some updates drop.



the weapon  
-game, but  
n smelling  
beefier  
suicide

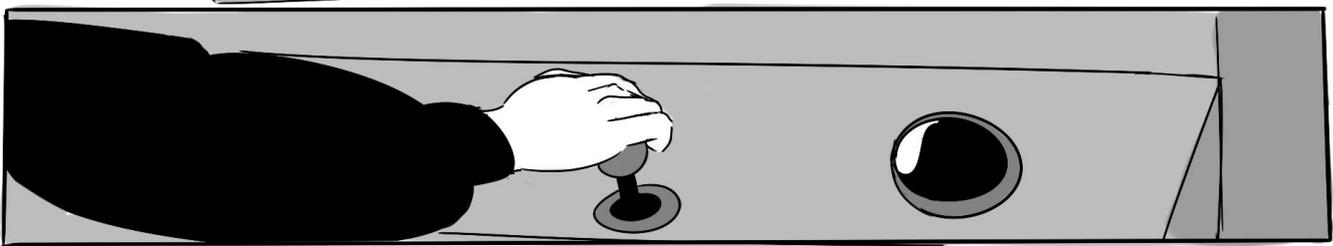
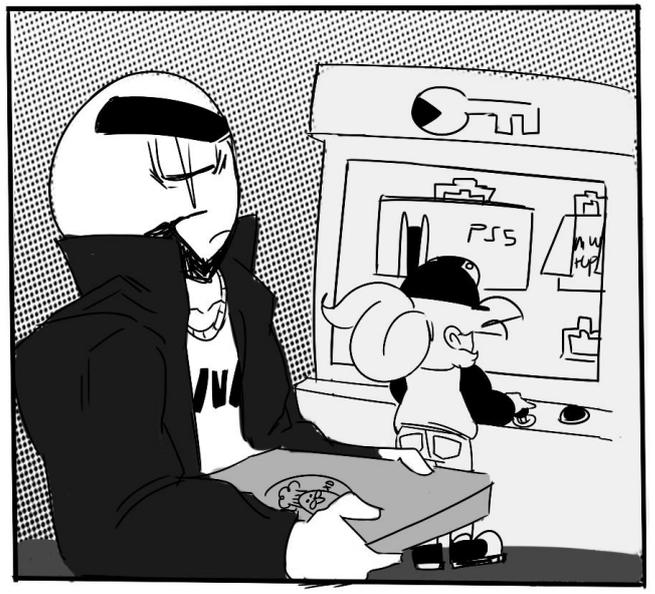
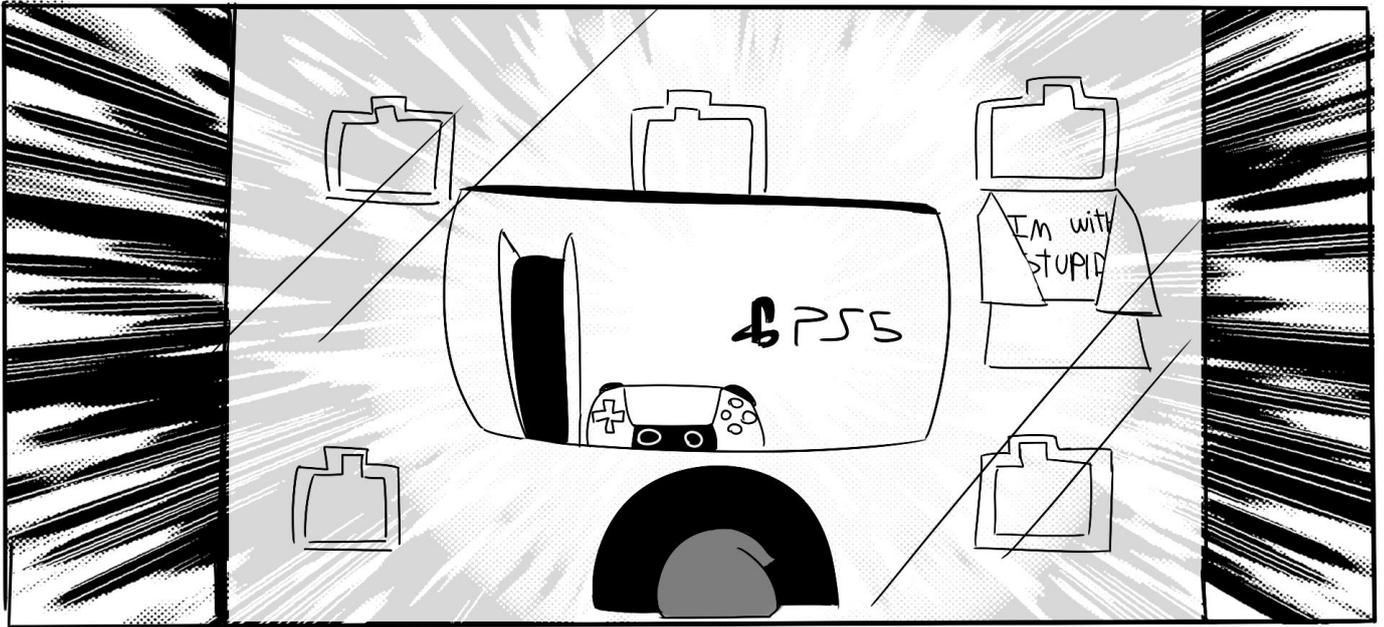
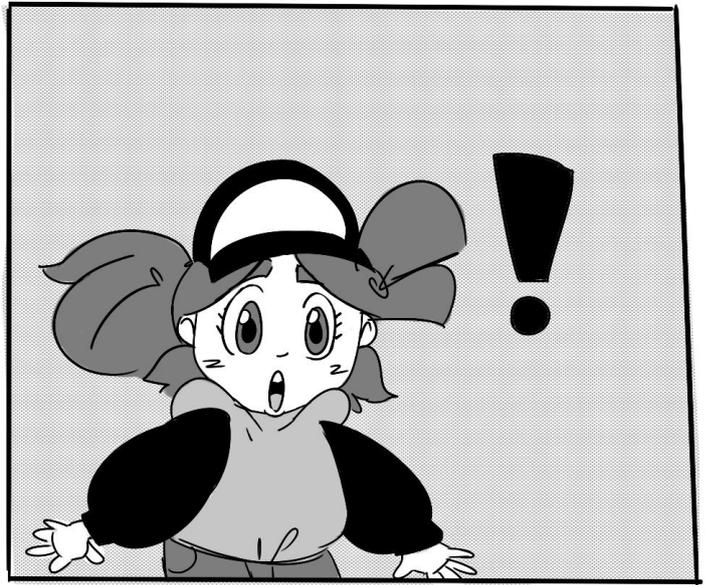
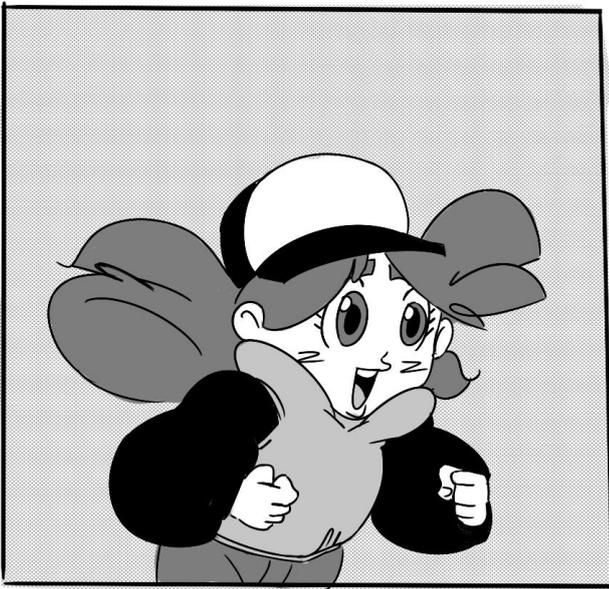
AT THE MALL

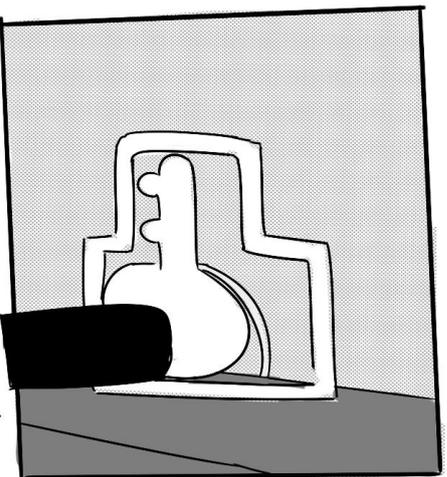
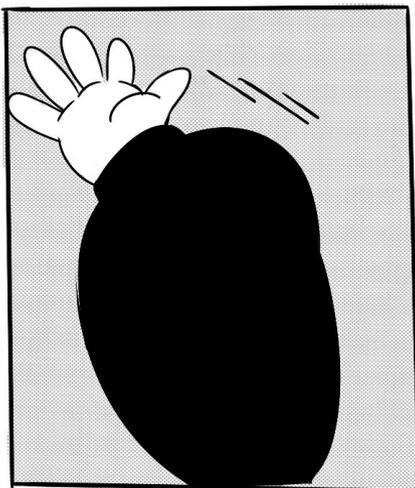


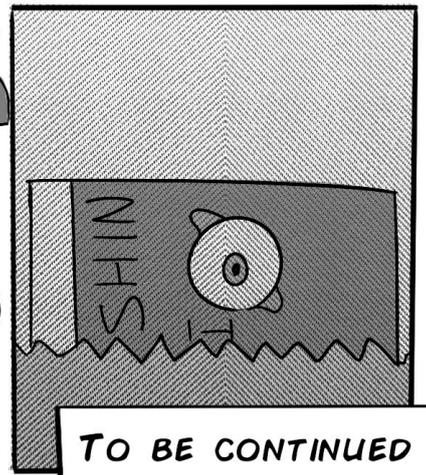


I'LL GO GET US  
SOMETHING TO EAT.  
GO LOOK FOR A TABLE.









# Wallpaper delight

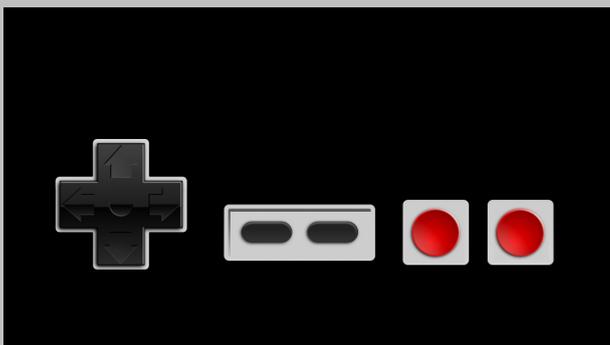
Right-click and "Copy Image" or "Save As..." in your superior PDF viewer of choice



Playstation.jpg  
2560 x 1440



Playstation\_2.png  
1193 x 911



NES\_controller.png  
2560 x 1600



Dreamcast\_eye.png  
2150 x 1209



SEGA\_Master\_System.png  
3033 x 1707



ATI\_redhead.jpeg  
1920 x 1080



# DOOM 3

## REVIEW

or how I learned to stop worrying and love the flashlight

Let me start off with a confession; I'm not a fan of First-Person Shooter (FPS) games. In fact, I'm not a fan of First-Person games in general. I haven't really played any, not the early classics like *Doom* and friends, nor the modern titles like *Call of Duty* and friends. I never gave them any attention, and the few I tried picking up over the years were dropped shortly after... So it may be a little strange that someone like me is reviewing an FPS game, but then again that's par for the course with gaming journalism.

The game I'm reviewing today is *Doom 3* (2004), a classic, but controversial title in video game history, and one that may have very well made me reconsider the genre. Come along with me on a little trip, where an FPS newbie plays his first FPS game to completion, and enjoys it. No spoilers.

### BABY STEPS

Getting this almost 20 y/o game running was surprisingly easy, thanks to the lead developer John Carmack releasing its source code for free a decade ago, in the process saving countless Linux users from having to run the game through WINE, a fate worse than death. I got the game's executable from a project on GitHub

called 'dhwem3', then ripped the game data off a retail CD and I was good to go.



*Doom 3* begins with the player aboard a spaceshuttle, approaching a research facility located on planet Mars in the year 2145 A.D. The player's character, an anonymous, "Space Marine", lands on the base and has to make his way to HQ for orders. We briefly see the Marine's face before the camera shifts to First-Person view and the player takes control... I take a look at the place from where I'm standing; an open space with a very futuristic design, tiny computer terminals everywhere, and various personnel walking about. But damn, this place is *dark!* The light sources are weak and the shadows are pitch black, shrouding non-illuminated areas in complete darkness... The atmosphere sets the tone for the game perfectly, I'm already a little uneasy

navigating the base without seeing what's in front of me at all times, this won't be a walk in the park and I know it.



I familiarize myself with the controls; walk, run, crouch, jump, punch/shoot. They're simple enough for anyone to learn quickly and I love that, keep it simple folks. I try interacting with the environment and to my delight a lot of it is destructible; I can punch soda cans and send them flying, I can punch boxes and slide them off into the abyss, I can even punch this red barrel-- **BOOM!** I'm blown to smithereens, and I haven't even met my first enemy yet. I'm having a blast... After reloading the game, I start interacting with the many personnel on site. Soldiers and security guards tell me where to go, while scientists and technicians casually chat with me about how spooked they are of this facility and wish to leave. They mostly keep things short though.



On my way to HQ I pick up a device called the Personal Data Assistant (PDA) which is where most of the world building happens. Each character in the game is assigned a PDA, which contains his emails and voice recordings, and can play in-game video discs. But what's really cool is that the player can download the contents of another character's PDA by picking it up, getting insight into that character's life and sometimes learning valuable information...



Moving on I finally reach HQ and report to Sergeant Kelly, who orders me to find a missing scientist in the underground of the facility, but not before picking up my gear first. The gear consists of a radio, a gun, body armor, and a flashlight.

I equip the gun automatically and shoot a couple of test rounds, then I try equipping the flashlight, only to find out that it's used as a standalone weapon. That means I can either equip the flashlight and see what's in front of me, or equip the gun and shoot in the dark... I thought that was extremely cumbersome, why can't I tape the flashlight to my gun or armor and see where I'm shooting? I guess I can just switch on the spot... No wait, switching is too slow! Maybe the real horror of this game is the weapon mechanics, but no use worrying about any of that now. I head to the underground.

## FACING THE MUSIC

After a short trek towards the underground I finally find the missing scientist, and all hell breaks loose... Literally.



The base is engulfed in an evil shroud, I can hear screams and distress calls on my radio as the facility personnel are attacked by unknown creatures, and the missing scientist turns into a living dead right in front of my eyes (upgraded from a Missing Person to an Undead Person). Left with no other choice, I shoot him down as he approaches me to attack. What a nightmare... I gotta get outta here and report to sarge! And with that the introductions are over, time for action.

The golden rule I came up with immediately is that I must stay calm. Panicking will get me nowhere, and will only cost me ammo and health. This caused me to develop a couple of strategies... The first few enemies encountered are the living dead, who tend to move slowly and deal little damage, so the most efficient --and fun-- way to take them out is using... the flashlight! You see, the flashlight is not just for illumination, once you equip it and click the attack button you'll start

"whacking" enemies on the head with it. This is great because now I can see my surroundings at all times and attack in a fraction of a second without switching weapons. But there's a catch; enemies can attack you even while you're attacking them, so the best way to circumvent that is by approaching the enemy quickly, whacking him once with the flashlight, quickly moonwalking away as he slowly swings at the air, then repeating the process. Two to three blows like this are enough for these guys to drop to the floor, and for a "happy ending" I whack their now unmoving corpses once more and see them disintegrate into a splatter of blood. Is that satisfying or what?!



With other enemies, such as imps and Z-Sec (Zombie-Security), the flashlight becomes useless. These guys are much faster and shoot projectiles at the player from afar, while also dealing considerable damage with their hands/claws if approached. A gun is a must in this case, but switching from the flashlight is slow, and that's where the other strategy comes in...

Basically I walk around slowly with my flashlight in hand soaking in as much of the map layout as possible, then when a fast enemy appears I take a few steps back, switch to a firearm and fire blindly into the abyss. It was a bit tricky for me to pull off at first,



especially when trying to evade projectiles by moving side to side as well as backwards, but after some practice (and some save-scumming) I got better at it. A good skill to acquire here is anticipating when and where enemies will spawn, and preparing yourself accordingly.



New enemies are constantly being introduced to the player throughout the game, each more horrifying and gruesome than the last. Some throw projectiles, some jump at the player, and some do both. It's up to the player to manage how to deal with each one, which can be difficult if you're outnumbered, but thankfully the good old "shoot at it until it dies" strategy works fine every time... Despite the great variety of enemy types present in-game, the vast majority of the ones encountered are imps, and more often than not they spawn in a jumpscare-like fashion which can get old after a while.

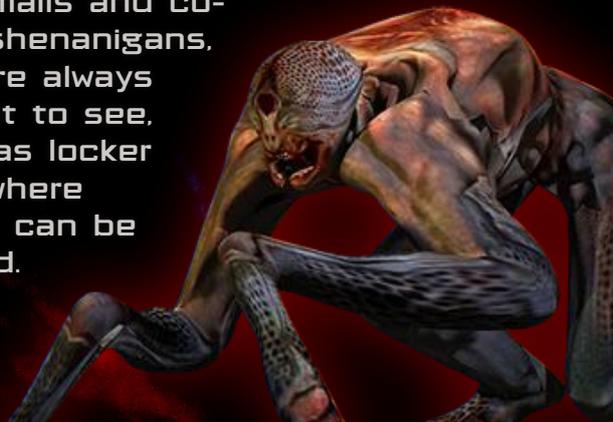
## TAKING THE SCENIC ROUTE

Disregarding the instances of cheap jumpscares, the game manages to build tension through the atmosphere incredibly well. Maps are designed with great attention to detail, fleshing out each location with elaborate decor like one would expect from a real research facility. Light sources are strategically

placed to draw attention to areas of interest or hide enemies and secret areas in darkness, sometimes flickering to add a bit more unease to the environment. In a few areas I found myself alone for suspiciously long periods of time, hearing subtle sounds or feeling movement in the background not knowing where it's coming from, keeping me on the edge the whole time... Will my next encounter be a new enemy? Will it be a boss? Or will I meet a survivor from the research team?



Most of the story is told through PDAs and video disks instead of cutscenes. As I advanced further and further into the facility, seeing it get devoured by nightmarish abominations, leaving trails of bodies and blood in their wake, I frequently stumbled upon PDAs lying next to their former owners' body. After downloading a PDA's data into mine I get a look into its owner's life: what he worked on, the occurrences he dealt with, the signs that things were going south before all hell broke loose, and so on. All of this told through the owner's personal voice recordings and emails, written to be as realistic as can be. Sometimes there are even spam emails and co-worker shenanigans, which are always a delight to see, as well as locker codes where goodies can be obtained.





The gameplay was rewarding, the visuals were gorgeous, and the story was surprisingly interesting and unexpected. There were some downsides, like with any game, but they didn't detract much from the experience and I was able to live with them... *Doom 3* may be a bit too different from its predecessors, at least to my limited knowledge, but it's such a pleasant game in its own right. Absolutely worth a playthrough for FPS fans and non-fans --such as myself-- alike.

Sadly a lot of this world building can be missed if the player gets caught up in defeating enemies and progressing the story, which is quite a shame because a lot of it is very interesting and charming in its own way. This is why I always make it a priority to explore, even if the environment is screaming at me to run and shoot, I simply stay calm and clear out all enemies, then take my sweet time inspecting every nook and cranny. Jumping on platforms, crawling through vents, squeezing through gaps, every part of the map must be explored... It has always been rewarding, either with secret items and PDAs, or with completely new weapons.



## WRAPPING UP

Overall *Doom 3* was an extremely enjoyable game, with a lot of small things in the game's design coming together nicely to give the player an engaging and immersive experience.





DO IT FOR  
HER



# Recommendation

## 411:



Mega Man Battle Network, or Rockman.EXE in Japan, is an Action Card RPG series about styling on your opponent. Battles are fought on a real-time grid system. Your cards – referred to as “Battle Chips” in the series, give you attacks which all have their own ranges and special properties. Your primary method of receiving Chips is by slaying enemies, which grants you more Chips and money to buy said Chips. Battles themselves use a grading system, meaning that killing enemies quicker and more efficiently gives you rarer rewards. Higher grades giving you Chips that are objectively better is typically the exception. In most cases you will get alternate versions of Chips that you already own, allowing you to better customize and express yourself. The better you get at the game, the more fun it gets. Fucking masterclass.

### The TL;DR

Play “Operate Shooting Star”, then 2–3, skip directly to 6, then try out 4 and 5 later. Take a look at 4.5 with the “Real Battle Network” patch at some point after 6 if you’re curious.

### Good Morning, Lan

The first Battle Network is pretty by-the-numbers as far as first games go. It’s mostly just establishing the world and setting of the games and setting up fun facts for the series that later games are going to milk pretty hard. Are you aware that MegaMan.EXE, the AI “NetNavi” that Lan uses to surf the web and fight battles, has a personal connection to Lan? The balance is also about as scuffed as you’d imagine it would be – notably, the Chip “Buster Bomb” gives you the ability to use a weaker Chip as many times as you want, basically as long as you want to. It’s recommended that you play the Japanese-only DS Port, called “Rockman.EXE Shooting Star”. It features the ability to play as the main character from the sequel series, but more importantly it has some pretty vital QOL improvements. Trust me, there’s one scenario in the original that’s absolutely godawful to play through and the port fixes it; it is worth the extra effort to hunt down the DS rom and patch.

### That Game That Came Before The Third One

Battle Network 2 is kinda weird in that either you’ll swear up and down that it’s the best game in the series, or you’ll find it just kinda unremarkable. I’m obviously in the latter camp.

The main point of interest is the addition of the “Style

Change” system, basically giving MegaMan a variety of buffs in exchange for gaining an elemental weakness. It’s a great idea, but pretty held down by Custom Style being dramatically stronger than basically every other Style. The plot is also trying to do this world adventure thing, but personally I feel like the game bit off a little bit more than it can chew at this point in the series and it’s not as grand as it wants to be. Though overall it’s still worth checking out, just because it sets up some plot points that it’s sequel will expand on.

From this game on, you may also want to check out the “Virtual Console Patch” for each of them. The biggest change is that by entering the “Comm.” option in the pause menu and exiting, you get a bunch of Chips that you can’t obtain normally in the game. It’s good for 100% completion and dicking around in postgame, but not recommended for normal gameplay because most of them are overpowered to shit.

### The “Best” Mega Man Battle Network

We’re in the real shit now. 3 is the game that most people think of when they think of Battle Network. The biggest notable addition is that of the “Navi Customizer”, a feature that allows you to equip buffs from an ever-expanding pool to MegaMan. The Navi Customizer really helps, but you have to manage it like a backpack in a horror game. It’s pretty in-depth and allows for diverse setups depending on what’s needed for the situation. Style Changing is back, but Styles are more or less relegated to being supplementary for the Navi Customizer.

The star of the show is the balancing of the game, starting off pretty normal with your toolset getting wackier and wackier as the game progresses. It’s very tightly designed from the early game to late postgame – your strongest Chips are almost always either situational, require a good amount of setup, or are awkward to use properly. Navi Customizer parts will get larger and more awkwardly shaped as the power level increases. When you fuck up a boss good, it almost always feels deserved and like a reward for game knowledge. Even when the game does relinquish it’s battle ending Chips to you, it’s basically at the point where you’ve seen everything that it has to offer and it’s just something fun to do while you clean up for 100%. This is as good as a time as any to mention that the postgame is about as long as the main game, giving you ample time to try out all the cool shit you start getting in droves.

This game also gets praise for having the most story out of the entire series. And yeah, there is some amount of emotional conflict, and there are certain characters who get actual motivations rather than just being assholes for no reason. But honestly, you really shouldn’t be playing these games to experience any semblance of a plot.

This is really more of a water-bottle-in-a-desert kind of situation. That being said, the way this game depicts the Undernet, the civilization of criminal NetNavis, is amazing. Really wish that the devs did more with this depiction going forward.

## The Mega Man Games That Spelled "Z-Saber" Wrong

Mega Man Battle Network 4 and 5, which together form the "Dark Chip Arc" of the series, I do not consider to be very enjoyable.

4 was very clearly rushed to market following the smash hit success of 3 and Crapcom's subsequent decision to milk the franchise until it's bone dry. 4 is just atrocious all around. Bad Chips, a localization so bad that it hit meme status, and a soundtrack that (with one exception) sounds like it's better suited for a cheap mobile game in the modern day. "Dark Chips", one of the newest gimmicks of this game, is arguably the most poorly thought out gimmick in the entire series – the idea of a functional morality system is cool, but in practice it's a reward for being shit at the game. There was a glitch that occurred when playing on the Nintendo DS that was so severe that Nintendo themselves had to step in and officially recognize it. And the kicker is that you have to NG+ twice just to be able to play the entire game. Absolute mess.

5 is actually alright if you're able to contend with three quarters of the game being wasted on an abysmal pseudo-TRPG minigame. Even carries into postgame, just in case you were hoping you'd get a fucking breather. If you're going to play 5, do it on the GBA. The DS port has more stuff, but the original soundtrack was remastered or something and it sounds muddy and gross. They took the best Undernet theme in the entire series and fucking mutilated it. Also, there are voicelines in the DS port that some dipshit on the localization team thought needed a redubbing, and I don't believe you want to hear a twenty year old man pretending to be a 10 year old boy shout every time you start a battle or do a Program Advance.

## Battle Crossing: Wild Internet

Sorry, but this one needs a little bit of historical context.

You know that E-Reader thing Nintendo was doing around this time? You know, that marketing gimmick with collectible real-life trinkets that give game rewards, that they thankfully dropped afterwards and neither they nor any other company tried out after this time period? Apparently Capcom wanted a piece of the pie. And what better series to push it on than a card game?

Basically, every game after 4 had an option to use the "Battle Chip Gate", a peripheral that used real-life Battle Chips instead of the in-game ones in order to attack. It was literal gachashit. And Rockman.EXE 4.5 – Real Operation is a game made for the express purpose of shilling Battle Chip Gates.

I think that the devs took the "Real" part of this game a little bit too much to heart. Major events are real-time gated – There is a tournament that you can enter only at specific times of day, and tournaments that you can only enter on specific fucking days. And there isn't a lot else I can say about this game, because I'd like to not have to start fiddling with my computer clock to get the most out

of a game.

Still might be worth checking out, just because you can select Roll.EXE as your NetNavi and look at her thighs. The "Real Battle Network" patch is a must-have. A "feature" of this game and any games in the Battle Chip Gate mode is that it locks you into this weird movement system in battle where you can't actually directly control your character, and this mod just sweeps the whole thing under the rug and gives you access to the real battle system of the Battle Network games.

## Mega Man's Violent Rape Crusade

6 is a personal favorite of mine. It's a real guilty pleasure. Everything feels streamlined and satisfying. The devs took all the new series additions from 4 and 5 and polished them to a mirror sheen. It's really easy to get comfortable with.

But what really sets this game apart from the others is the addition of "Beast Out". After a few hours of the game, for plot reasons you absorb the final fucking boss of the game and get to access it's powers at any time. And it feels like you're accessing the powers of the final boss of the game. You absolutely tear ass.

The best boss track in the entire series rages in your eardrums as you just fucking lay into other NetNavis. The lock-on feature of the Beast Out transformation means that all the Sword Chips that previously sucked due to lack of range are now 110+ damage murder sticks from any point of the field. Beast Out even stacks with the "Cross System", another transformation gimmick, for even more varieties of bullshit abilities.

It's amazing. This is the best way to close out a game series, and every other game series should notes. It's highly recommended that you play the Japanese version. The games after 4 started this cross-promotion gig with Boktai, some GBA series that Hideo Cuckjima was involved with for some reason. Long story short, the third Boktai game never made it to western shores, which was a problem, because Battle Network was now shilling for a series that stopped sending games overseas. The localization team thought that the best solution to this was to fucking tear that shit out of the game, and the US and EU versions have a gaping hole where the exclusive area, boss and Chips used to be.

## Also, This Series Has Rollback Netcode

Yeah, I know. Right? If there's one thing I can say about current year, it's that it's way easier for people to get together and make stupid projects like this. Tango is an emulator specifically designed for Mega Man Battle Network netplay. It works for all games in the series, including 4.5. The community consensus is that the game with the best balance for 2-player versus is 6, though as of writing this there is an effort to mod 3 to have better balance. Now, I'm not trying to beg anybody to start a game night for Mega Man Battle Network 6. But if there was, and somebody streamed it on Cytube as it was happening, wouldn't that be cool or what? Haha.

## Everything Else

Mega Man Network Transmission and that WonderSwan game are vanilla Mega Man games except with a cooldown bar. Mega Man Battle Chip Challenge is the Action Card RPG without the Action. Apparently there's a patch that fixes a major gameplay flaw or something, I don't know, I didn't play this shit. Haven't seen the anime or manga, but supposedly the manga is really good. The anime is apparently less so, but I remember hearing that there was a lot of fanservice.

## More Virus Busting

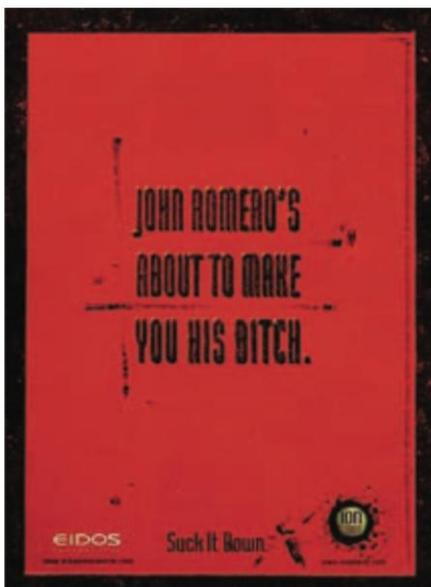
Shanghai.EXE is the obligatory Touhou fangame, and it's pretty good. But the guy who made it went full retard and tried to monetize it, was given the C&D, and now you have to hunt down the decensor patch before you're able to fully enjoy it.

Explora World looks like it'd be pretty fun, but I never got it to work on my machine, so your mileage may vary.

Mega Man Battle Network Chrono X never ever.

As of writing, it looks like indieshit is probably going to give card-based grid combat the rounds over the next few years. Notably, Duelists of Eden is planning on just removing the roguelite shit out of the equation entirely and making it a PVP deckbuilder. And I fully support the effort to remove roguelite shit out of any game.

I think that I'm the only guy on Sleepy who actually knows about this one, but Mega Man Battle Network Zero Crisis is pretty cool. It's more like a weird fighting game deal where you can play with the movesets of the bosses and stuff. Just uh, ignore the kikestarter project on the guy's page, I guess.



**You know, I NEVER wanted to make you my bitch, not you, not them, not any of the other players and, most importantly, not any of my fans... That stupid ad. I regret it, and I apologize**

**for it... You know, when the ad was first presented to me, I knew it was risky, and I didn't want to do it.**



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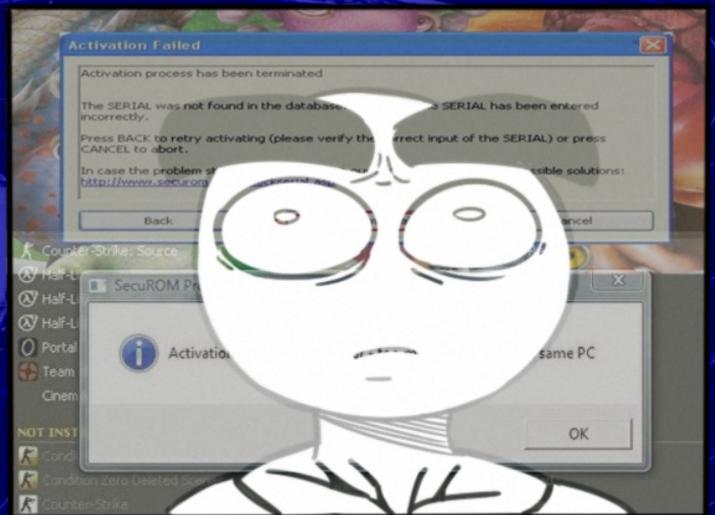
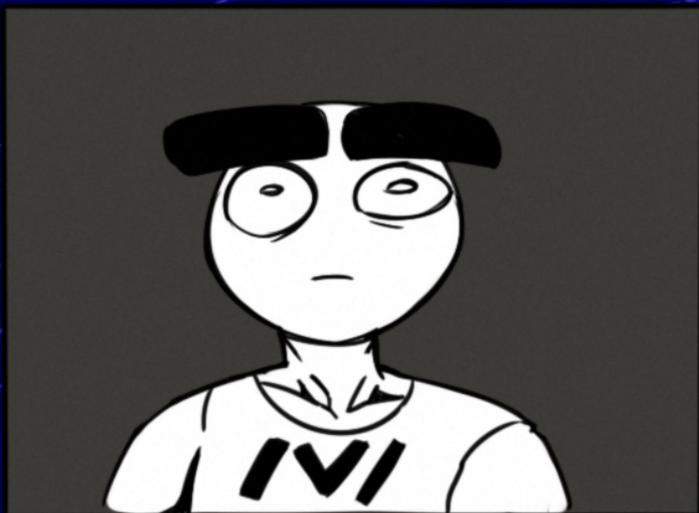
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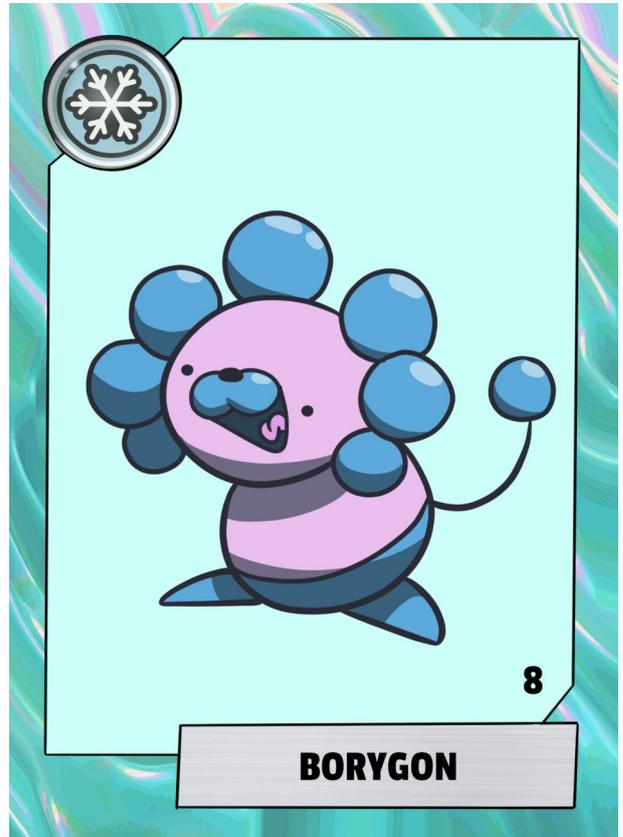
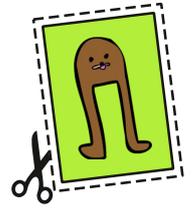
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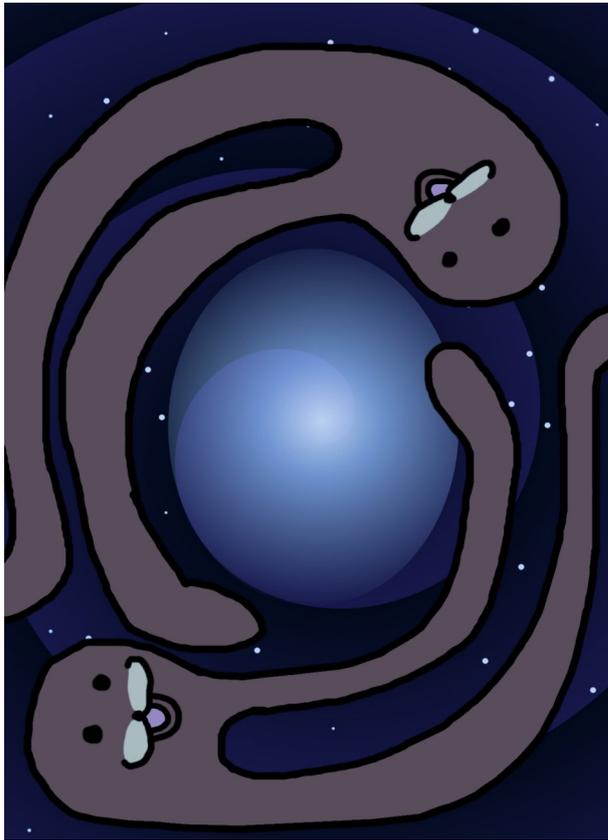
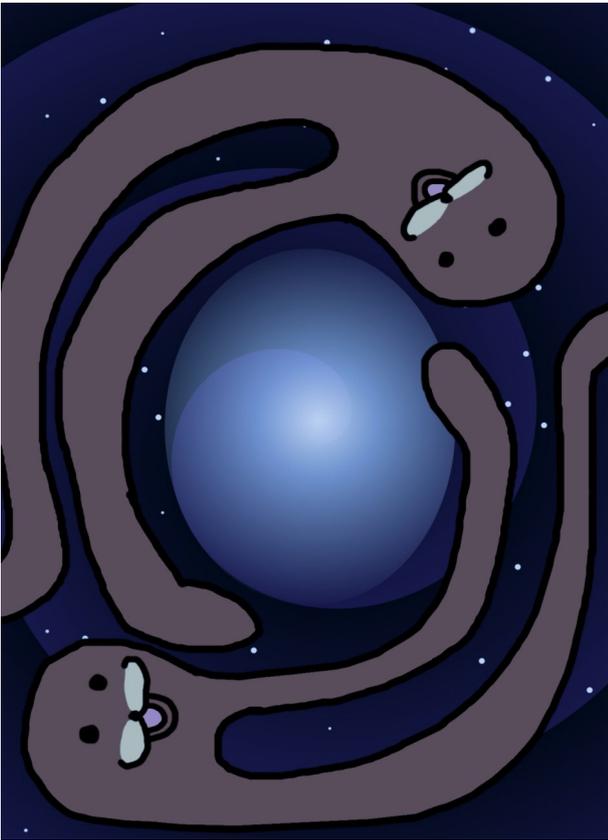
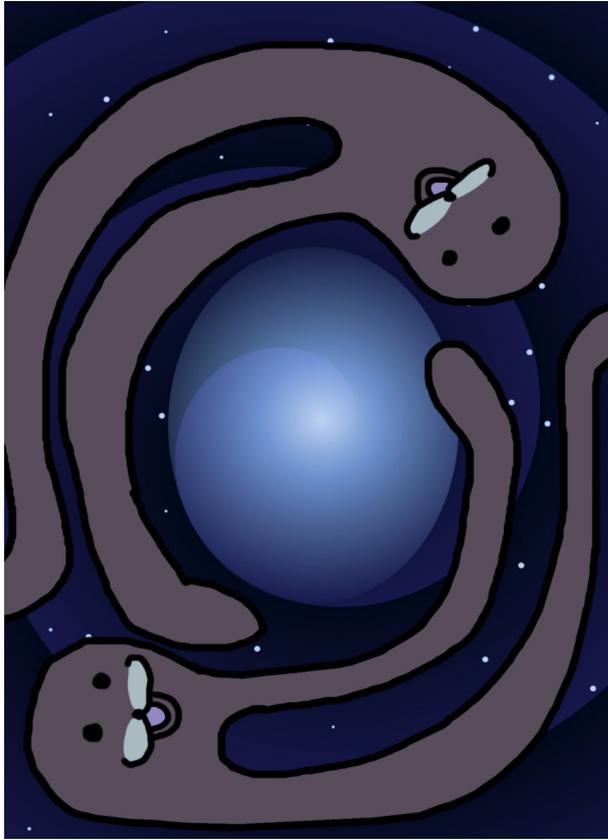
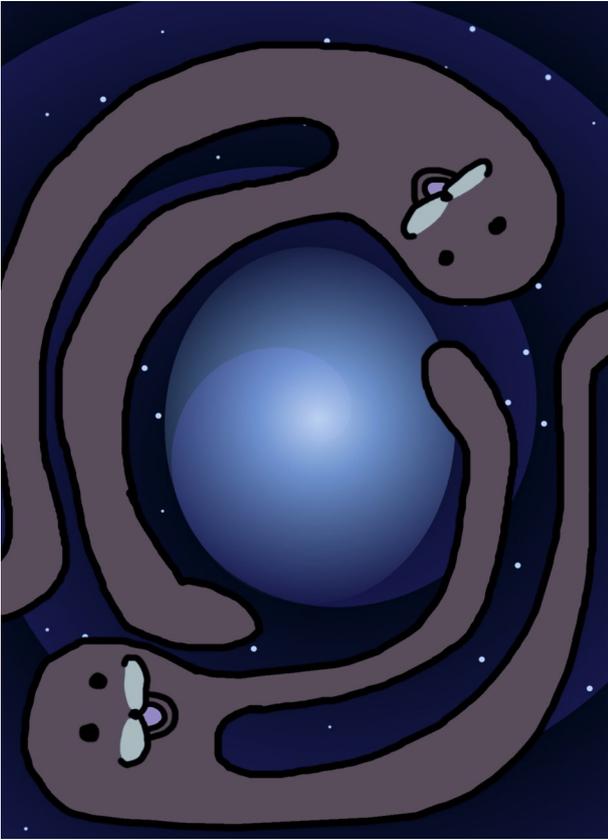


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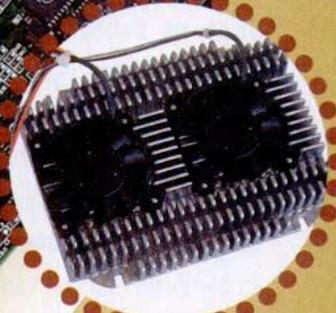
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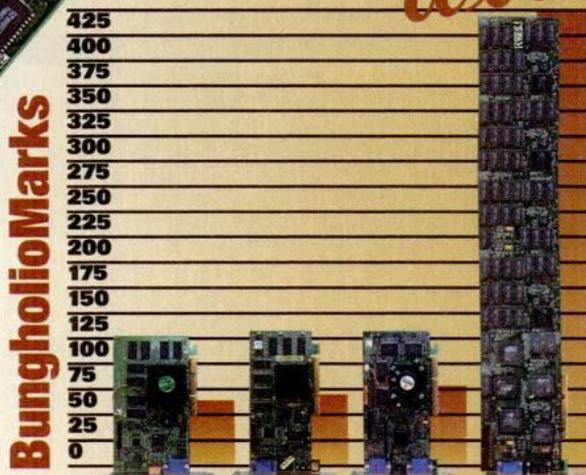
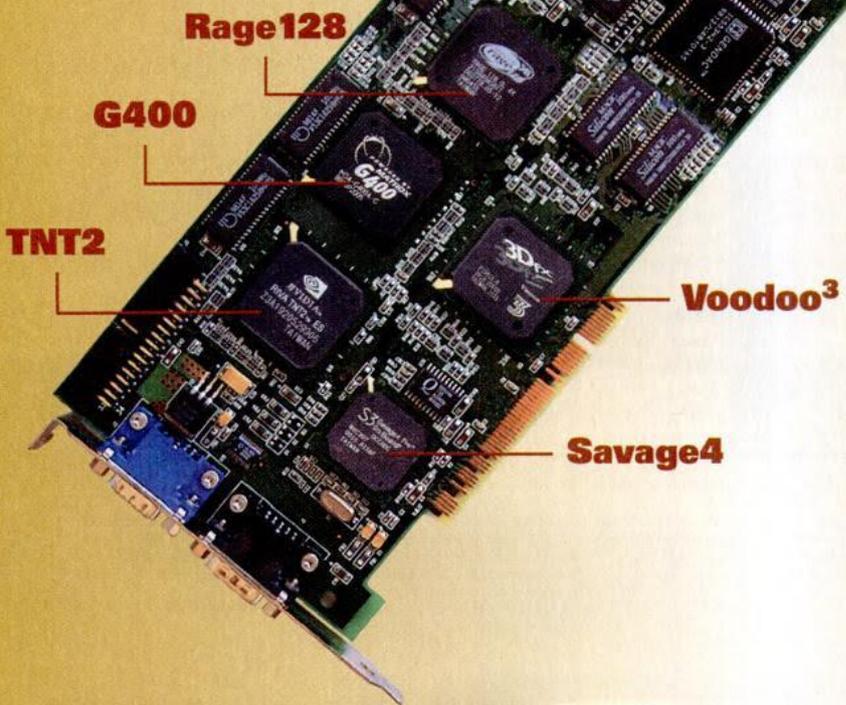
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**ZZZ**