



ARCH RIVALS

Arch Rivals, the latest in a growing line of Megadrive basketball games, casts aside the serious sim aspect of previous titles and proffers a more cartoon-like, humorous approach to the sport.

Only two players from each team are on the court at any time and the player controls only one of this pair. As any non-baboon knows, the object of the game is to score more points than the other team by

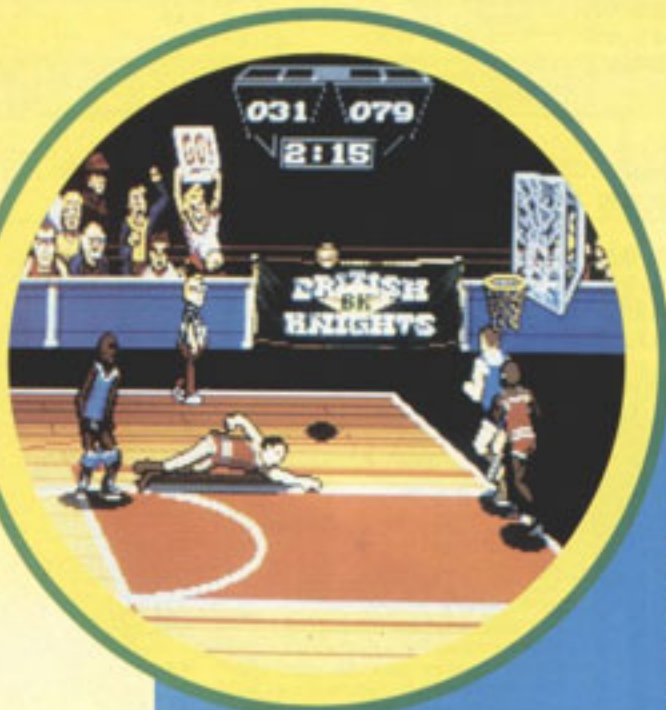
simply posting the ball through their hoop. However, such is the desperation to win that the teams stoop to whatever unsportsmanlike measures it takes. Thus, on-court violence is an integral part of Arch Rivals. What's more, there's a two-player option so you can biff your friends any time you like (although it's advisable to only do this in the game)!

COMMENT



The idea behind this humorous, knockabout arcade-style basketball game is a good one, but like its arcade counterpart, it simply doesn't provide enough

JULIAN fun to keep you playing. Controlling only one player is frustrating, especially since the other player lacks intelligence and never does what you want, and the ropey collision detection just makes things worse. And that's not all! The controls themselves sound good, but in practice they're fiddly and scoring baskets is very simple once you get the game sussed, which takes very little time at all. In two-player mode there's a tiny spark of fun, especially if you manage to pull your opponent's trousers down (very strange and perverted indeed), but really it's all too shallow and superficial to sustain interest for more than a couple of afternoons.

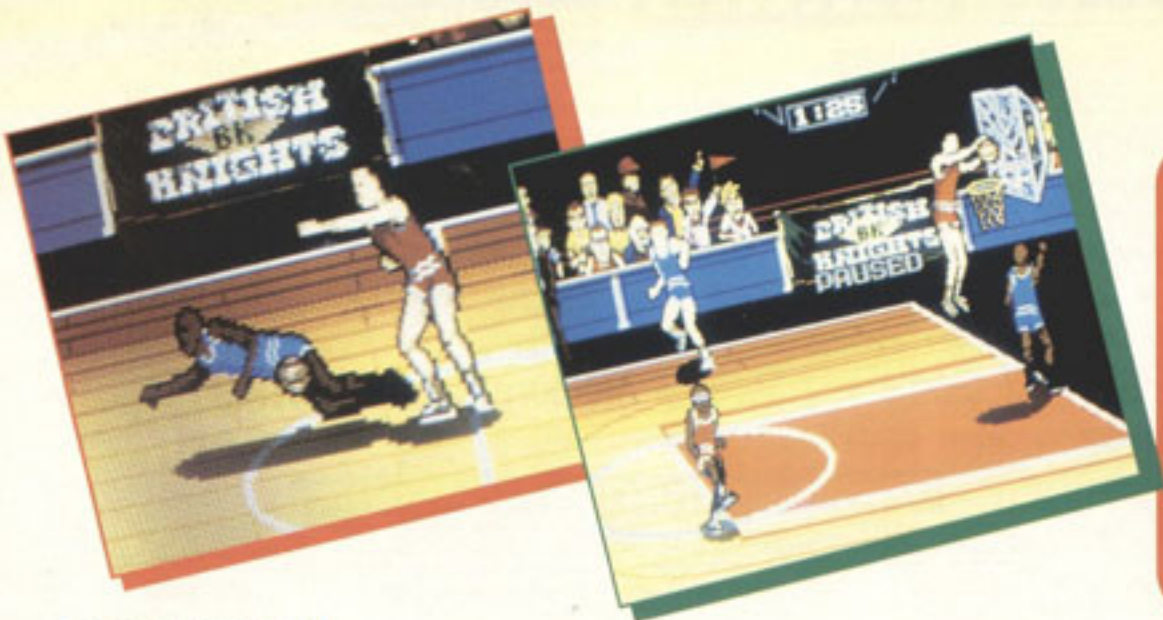


STARTING AT THE BOTTOM

The rugby tackle is useful for any number of things. Firstly, it is used to bring opponents down, causing them to release the ball. Secondly, it is used to block passes and catch rebounds. Lastly, if successfully performed, it sees you pulling down the shorts of an opposing player!

MANIPULATE YOUR BALL

Although passing and shooting are still important facets of the game, the moves available to your team stretch beyond such mundane pursuits. By combining button presses those crazy basketball types can feint passes, fake shots, block and leap. On a slightly less polite front, they can also rugby tackle each other, and steal the ball by smiting the possessor a mighty facial blow!





COMMENT



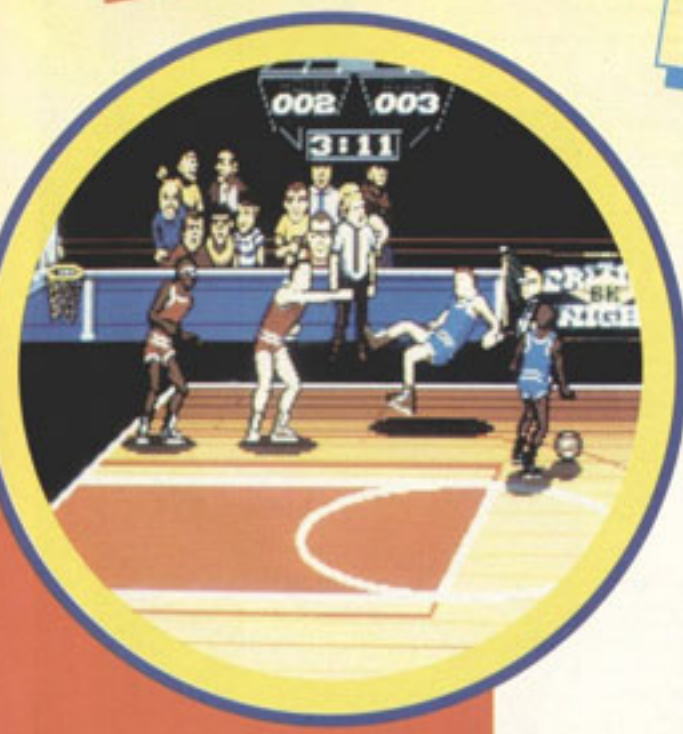
RAD

Given that there is no shortage of horizontally scrolling basketball games for the Megadrive, Arch Rivals at least scores points for trying to do something a bit different.

Unfortunately, this is just about the only thing Arch Rivals has going for it. For starters, the whole idea of two-on-two basketball is a little pointless, leaving no scope for real strategy or team play, a point which is reinforced by the lack of any real rules - it's just run 'n' shoot all the way. Only being able to control one player is another let down. Half the time your player isn't even on the screen! This makes things frustrating to say the least. The collision detection and perspective are also poorly done, making steals and punches difficult from any sort of angle. Then there is the tiny number of teams, it must have

MENAGE A QUATRE

There are four teams to choose in Arch Rivals. Each consists of four players, and only two can play in each game. From the menu you choose the player you would like to control; the Megadrive then automatically chooses a partner for you. Each team has their own playing style, so matches between Los Angeles and San Francisco are quiet affairs, whilst playoffs featuring Natural High and Brawl State are veritable slugfests!



been possible to put in more than four, and the lack of any sort of league. This leaves Arch Rivals bereft of any lasting appeal. What's the point in playing an endless string of friendlies? Even in two-player mode Arch Rivals is no better, scoring baskets is more a matter of luck than judgment, and the wild over-responsiveness extends this sad state of affairs to just about every other action too! If it's lark-related sporting horseplay you're after, head for Supreme Court Basketball instead.

BY: IMAGEWORKS

PRICE: £34.99

RELEASE DATE: TBA

GAME DIFFICULTY: EASY

LIVES: N/A

CONTINUES: N/A

SKILL LEVELS: 1

RESPONSIVENESS: ERRATIC



PRESENTATION 72%

There are a number of options, but they're not very user-friendly and pointless.

GRAPHICS 61%

Well-animated but under-detailed sprites and a single, limp backdrop.

SOUND 49%

A repetitive tune bleats throughout, ruptured only by a few dismal effects and fuzzy speech.

PLAYABILITY 43%

Over-responsive and far too simplistic, there's no thought or skill required to win.

LASTABILITY 27%

No league or playoffs mean single games quickly become boring. Two player mode is unlikely to save it.

OVERALL 40%

A dull and frustrating release whose "comedy" facade doesn't dredge it from the bowels of tedium.