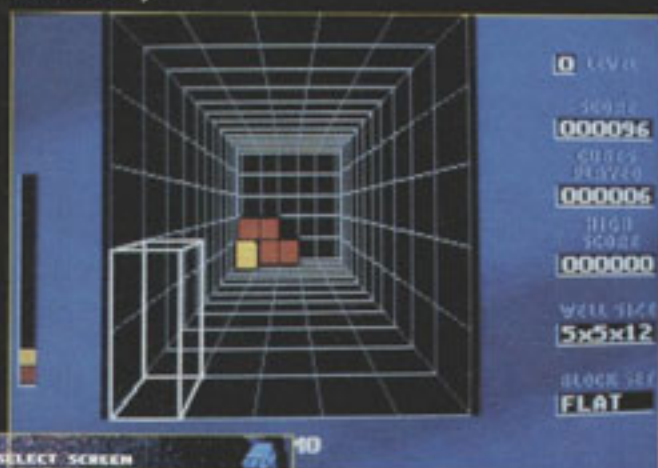




Strange shapes are rather popular on the consoles. Tetris and Columns have both been big hits, with their similar themes of falling shapes. Now a new game has arrived; Blockout. Unlike the other two, this is a three-dimensional game, with large lego-shapes tumbling from the heavens.

The three buttons control the spin of the block along its three axes, and the start button drops it into the bottom section. When an entire coloured level is completed it disappears leaving more room for the next blocks. As with Tetris, the blocks appear with increasing speed. The options allow either flat blocks (as in Tetris) or blocks with parts sticking out in all directions.

In two-player mode the screen splits as the players compete to finish a certain number of levels before the other person manages to do it. Of course, if the blocks reach the top of the pit then it's game over immediately!



▲ The very beginning of the game, on Flat Fun (easy) mode.

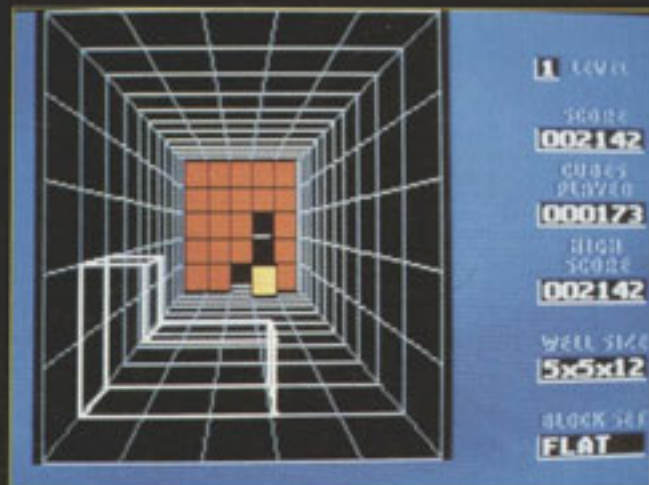
◀ The Options.

COMMENT



JULIAN

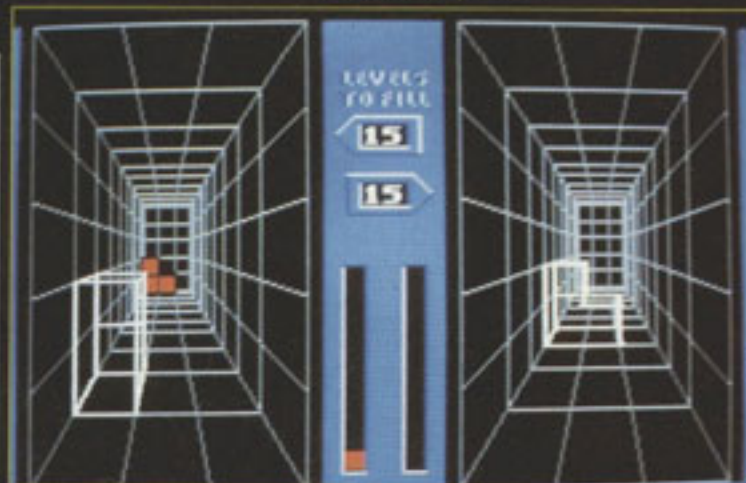
I didn't think much of Blockout when it was released on home computer format, but this Megadrive version has been tweaked and smoothed out to make it a highly enjoyable and very challenging puzzle game. It doesn't seem like it at first, though, since the awkward control method is difficult to get to grips with, and you constantly make frustrating mistakes. However, stick at it, and once you know all the moves the game suddenly becomes incredibly addictive! The icing on the cake is the brilliant two-player mode, which adds a new and very competitive aspect to the proceedings. In fact, I'd go so far to say that it's one of the best two-player head-to-head battles yet devised on the Megadrive! Although Blockout looks a bit boring, make sure you check it out when you see it - you'll be surprised as to just how good it is.



▲ Best to rotate this through the X axis.

OPTION OPTIONS

It's best to play Blockout with two players, as the challenge to beat someone else is better than just getting beyond a certain level. Other options let you increase or decrease the dimensions of the pit, determine the speed of the falling blocks and whether the blocks are flat or multi-surfaced. If you're after a ridiculous task, play the game on "Out of control" level; it's fantastically hard!





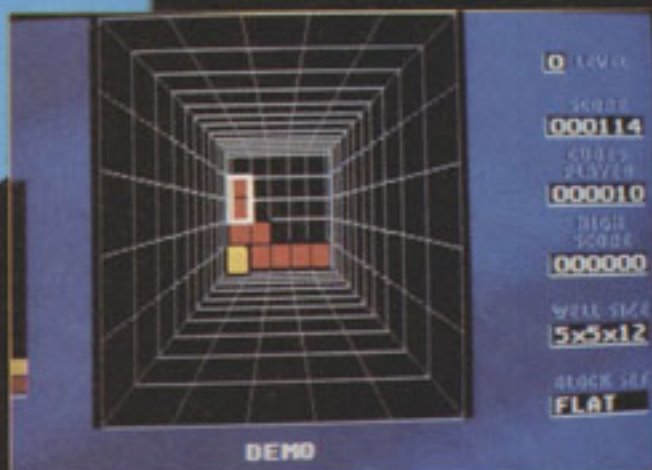
COMMENT



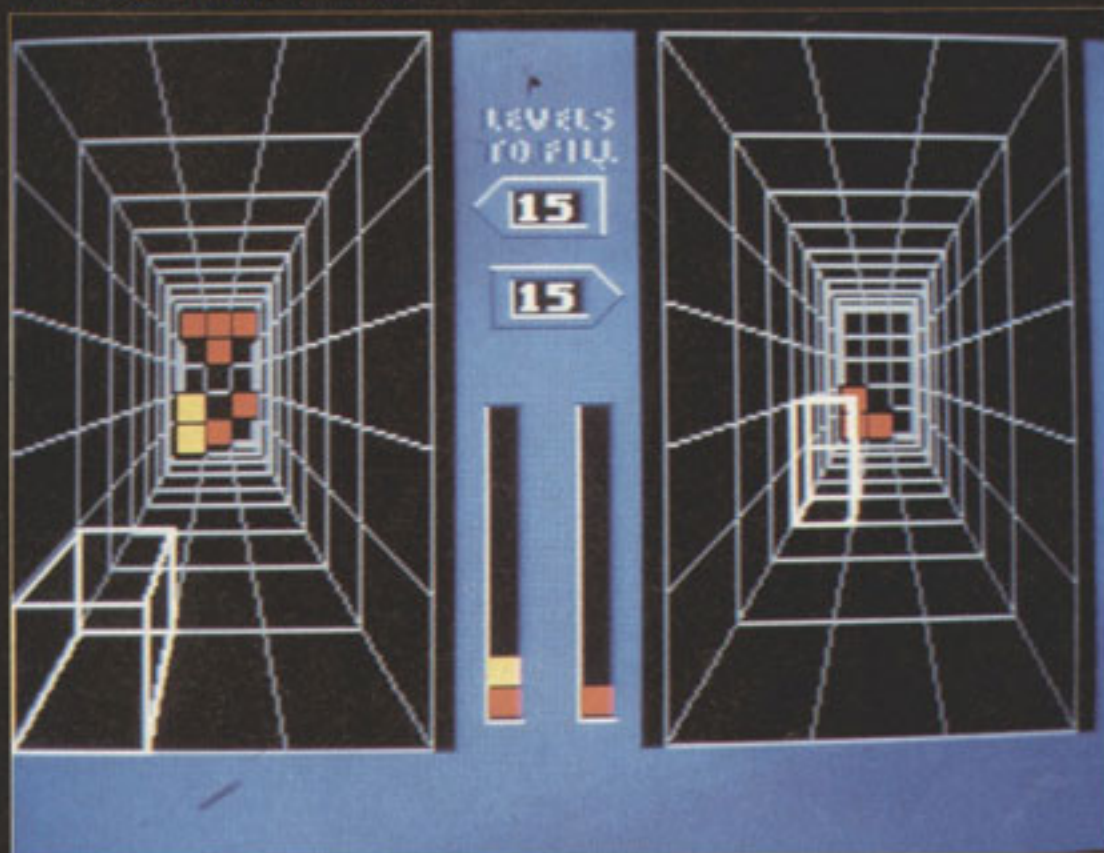
MATT

I didn't think this would be a patch on Columns, but call me a duff old codger if it isn't a lot better! Although it isn't as soothing as Columns (in fact it's downright infuriating), but the excellent 3D perspective gives it a new dimension (groan) in play. The two-player mode tends to be a little less playable because of the lack of space on-screen, but it means that you can challenge a friend instead of just banging away at the computer. Don't be put off by the bland screenshots, this is a fantastic game which every Megadrive owner should seriously consider buying.

Let the machine do the work! ▶



▼ The super two-player mode.



REVIEW



BY: EA

PRICE: £34.99

RELEASE DATE: JUNE

GAME DIFFICULTY: TRICKY

LIVES: N/A

CONTINUES: 0

SKILL LEVELS: 4

RESPONSIVENESS: FAST



PRESENTATION 78%

A variety of different options let you vary the type of game and the level you start on, and there's also a superb two-player option.

GRAPHICS 85%

Clear, smooth and straightforward graphics display the action perfectly.

SOUND 78%

Great title tune and simple, but appropriate in-game effects

PLAYABILITY 93%

It's not an easy job getting the hang of the controls, but once it's done the game's a joy to play.

LASTABILITY 90%

This kind of game is only limited by the player's abilities - you'll never beat it!

OVERALL 91%

A highly addictive one-player arcade puzzle game that also features one of the best two-player Megadrive challenges yet seen!