

I LIKE BOUNCING, BOING, BOING, BOING

Bulls vs Lakers gives you two ways to score. Press the A or C button outside the penalty box and you attempt a jump shot. The odds are slim, but if you score you get 3 points as a reward. Otherwise, use the A button to take close shots or special "Marquee" shots when you're in the zone. If you have possession, the B button is used for passing. But if you're defending its function is to select the nearest player to the ball.



▲ Go on lad, jump to it.



▲ The bench - purgatory for all dirty players.



▲ Spot the ball, NBA style.



▲ The teams join up for some folk dancing.

VS

LAKEERS



THE BIG ONE

Single games are only a preparation for the ultimate challenge of the NBA tournament. If you enter this you face some awesome competition from the best team players in basketball. The eighteen teams taking part compete in two leagues, the Western and Eastern conferences, and each league fields one team for the final. You can follow your progress on a massive scrolling tournament-board. The tournament stages are each played over the best of 7 games, with each team playing home and away. The computer records all the performance stats for each of your players as you progress. Thankfully a password facility has been included for you to start from where you left off.



DUNKIN' DO-NOTS

TRAVELLING: You are penalised if your player tries to dribble again after stopping.

TIME: After gaining possession you only have 24 seconds to attempt a shot. You also must move up to the opponent's half within 10 seconds.

BACK COURT: Once you have left your own half with the ball you can't pass it back to a player there.

CHARGING: The worst of all. A good ref does not tolerate any physical contact. But then again, he isn't always looking.

If any violations occur on the court a throw in is given to the other team. However, if they happen near the baskets two penalty shots are awarded. When a penalty is awarded all the players move up to the end, and the penalty taker stands in front of the basket. Then, in the screen's top right corner you will see two strips - one horizontal, one vertical, and a dot moving from end to end inside each. To score a penalty you have to stop the dot, by pressing the A button, slap bang in the centre of each strip. But for all that skill you are only awarded with one point, nyah!



▼ One of the most tense moments in any game... the dreaded penalty shoot.



COMMENT



GUS

The look of this game initially put me off - it ain't the prettiest basketball game there is. To make things worse, the control system takes time to master with multiple functions for

each button. After all that I found it was quite a playable simulation after all, but I still have some serious reservations about it. Any basketball game worth its salt should allow lots of stealing and interception, but in Bulls vs Lakers it's very hard to steal and you can't intercept a pass, which seriously limits the gameplay. Also, the amount of stats crammed into the game may impress you, but they are not much use when you can't distinguish the players on the court. The big omission, though, is any form of game strategy - not even the option of selecting different defence formations. Despite this, and the rather cramped feel of the court area, there's sports fun to be had here, especially if two players team up against the megadrive. But, personally speaking, I'd rather stick to good ol' Super Real Basketball.



DUNKS, DROPS AND VIDEO TAPES

One novel feature of Bulls vs Lakers is the instant replay mode. You use this when the game is paused and see yourself deftly outwitting a broken defence (or not). The joypad works like a VCR with freeze-frame and fast forward/backward.



BY: EA

PRICE: £39.99

RELEASE DATE: AUGUST

GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

LIVES: N/A

CONTINUES: N/A

SKILL LEVELS: 3

RESPONSIVENESS: OKAY



PRESENTATION 93%

Loads of options and stats to look at and tweak. In-game presentation is good too.

GRAPHICS 74%

The action sometimes gets cluttered, and the sprites look as if they could do with a good feed.

SOUND 80%

Hubbard-esque music on the title screen and the excellent speech create just the right atmosphere.

PLAYABILITY 83%

The controls are tricky at first, but the game pace is quite fast...

LASTABILITY 80%

...and with oodles of options and challenging gameplay, this isn't a game which'll be mastered overnight.

OVERALL 83%

An involved simulation which should definitely appeal to serious basketball fans. Arcade players might find it a bit too much, though.