



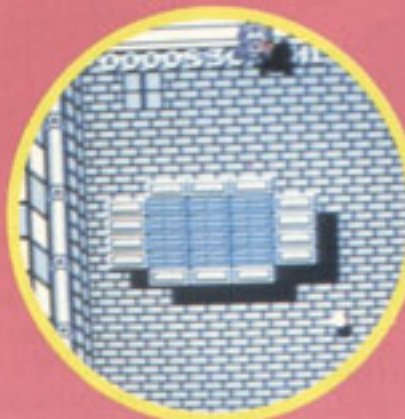
It's a bat's life, isn't it? Not only are you a mere length of bouncy material, suitable for bouncing balls off, but now you're trapped behind many walls of multi-coloured bricks, patrolled by a variety of fearsome alien guardians. Luckily, your spheroid-bouncing capabilities have provided you with a unique method of escape. By simply spanging a ball off various parts of what can be deemed your body, you can destroy the bricks which keep you prisoner, and the aliens as well!

Thus armed you set out on your Breakout-style bid for freedom, set over a number of static screens. Use your knowledge of ballistics and spatial geometry to destroy the bricks to best effect. If things get too hard, hit an enemy and grab a power-up. But watch out, you have only a limited number of balls with which to escape. Should you lose them all, you are trapped forever.

► Blat those blocks!



▲ Oh dear.



▲ Impossible screen ahoy!

COMMENT



RAD

Crackout's only rival in the travesty stakes is the piteous shambles they call Road Fighter. Right from the start, Crackout is boredom incarnate. There are no options and the title screen is as plain as it could get without just being copyright details. Start the game, and you are "treated" to a horrific cacophony that bodes badly for the rest of the game. Sadly, the game itself is even worse. The graphics are blandness extreme, unimaginative, poorly drawn and drably coloured. The deflection logic of the ball is decidedly ropey, it's impossible to hit the ball in a straight line for a start, and moving one pixel to one side usually results in a massive change of direction for the ball. The screens themselves are diabolical. The programmer's idea of a challenge is to either place a row of extra-hard bricks about one centimetre from your bat or to make the screen completely impossible unless you collect the right power-up. As the power-ups are distributed randomly, it's not unusual to spend up to ten minutes just killing aliens before finally leaving the screen. One specific screen which typifies Crackout is an example from the first level. The ball must be bounced through an alley of two walls to reach a few bricks otherwise protected. This can only be done by hitting the ball at *exactly* the right angle at *exactly* the right time. Should you achieve this, the ball will almost certainly hit the bricks immediately and the screen will be completed. It must have taken all of thirty seconds to think that one up, and for Crackout that's quite a complex screen! Crackout redefines the words repetitive, frustrating and dull, and while it's not quite as bad as Road Fighter, it's still unforgivable that this ever saw the light of day.

SPLAT THEM WITH YOUR BALLS

To complete each screen, every destructible brick must be thoroughly smashed. On some screens, though, green dinosaurs abound. These giant critters demand a good number of hits before copping it, and progress to the next screen is withheld until this is accomplished! Even worse, some of the little tykes move around, just to make your job that little bit more difficult.

CRACK

THE RETURN
OF SUPERMAN

Fresh from his appearance in Road Fighter, the Man of Steel, Superman himself also pops his cloaked visage into Crackout. If you should happen to see Supes flying down the screen in your direction, be sure to position your bat in his flight path. The aerial wonder should then fly you off to the next level in his own Kryptonite-fearing way.



BUSTING BALLS

The job of brick-busting is made somewhat easier by the power-ups held in the possession of those alien monsters. Icons drift down the screen upon the demise of their owners and these have a variety of uses. One puts the creatures to sleep for a limited time, another enlarges the bat, split-balls are also available, along with exploding shrapnel balls. One of the better bonuses, however is the rocket launcher. This enables you to launch missiles from your bat which explode with one press of the B button, destroying any meanies or bricks in the surrounding area!



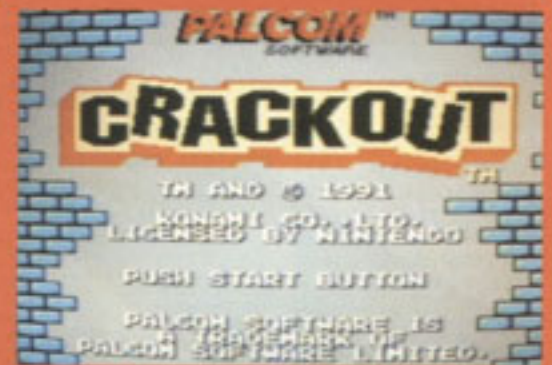
COMMENT



What do you get when you program a Breakout-style game with diabolically boring and unimaginative screen layouts, crappy bat control, hopeless

JULIAN collision detection, a tune that's about as pleasant as a baboon farting in your ear, graphics which are about as thrilling as a baboon mooning in your face, totally unrealistic ball movement, action that's so dull that you want to turn the game off after fifteen minutes of playing and some totally irritating gameplay quirks like the fact that power-ups are random and often they're vital to complete a screen so you hang about for ages waiting for them to appear? Crackout.

REVIEW



BY: KONAMI

PRICE: £TBA

RELEASE DATE: TBA

GAME DIFFICULTY: VARIABLE

LIVES: 6

CONTINUES: INFINITE

SKILL LEVELS: 1

RESPONSIVENESS: DREADFUL



PRESENTATION 20%

No options and barely a title screen.

GRAPHICS 36%

Samey backgrounds, dull, badly drawn and poorly animated enemies and insipid colours.

SOUND 21%

A few different collision noises and... er... that's it.

PLAYABILITY 19%

Poor controls, illogical bounce logic, possibly the worst designed screens ever, lack of challenge and frustrating bugs.

LASTABILITY 9%

It's very easy (when it's not ridiculously impossible) and the poor gameplay will keep you not coming back to it.

OVERALL 13%

A dreadful Breakout game which should be taken into the middle of a desert and buried in a deep, dark hole.